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AMERICANS IN EXII

FROM THE

PICTURES AND PAPERS OF PAUL DUA

Ex-Officer of the United States Army.

BY

GRACE STUART REID.



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AMERICANS IN EXILE.

CHAPTER I.

"MONSIEUR MOI."

I HAD long before arrived at years of discretion: I was well seasoned in the military profession. Yet, in the early part of the Civil War, I hotly made a decision which changed the whole course of my existence.

It may have been that I was embittered by a lonely life. My tall, spare shadow, mocking me from the walls of my lodging, was more a creature of relationships than I.

It may have been chagrin that prompted me. A recruit had rewarded my drilling by a powder mark among my sandy locks. I lay low with fever when my company marched out of New York amid the tears and plaudits of a multitude. I rose with a nervous debility of

mind as well as body, and found no holy purpose in North or South. I read demoralization in every face—fear, hatred, or riotous desire for self-glory.

The brother-in-arms who brought me instructions when I was able for duty, I had previously looked upon as humdrum enough. He seemed to me to have suddenly developed monstrous prejudices. We exchanged considerable differences of opinion.

“We need not expect our southern friends to turn from the error of their ways and cry ‘*pec-cavimus*,’” said he pompously. “If fifteen or twenty leaders of secession could be hanged up together, no doubt the rebs would come to their senses.”

I thought of that graceful and affectionate young fire-eater, Clay Monroe, who in a short stay North, had warmed my awkward coldness as mortal man had never done before. I sickened at the prospect that I was perhaps about to reward him with a bullet in his friendly face.

“Hang a score of fanatical abolitionists with your score of seceshers,” said I.

My companion looked at me with an irritating curiosity.

"I agree with Judge Montague of Charleston," I added. "The whole country is one big lunatic asylum."

"Not the whole, friend Duane," I was answered suavely. "Our manufacturers will never have made so much money as they are prospecting to do and will do in this war. Though cotton is high, they will sell at enormous profits. Jeff will play into their hands completely, no doubt much to his distaste, as he finds out Cotton is *not* king. We have thrifty bees with a store of cash to buy low and sell high."

A picture rose before me of the ruin that meant to Patty Dolliver, the one woman vivid in my small, dull world.

"You talk," said I, "as if the speculators and peculators of the North would have full license for plunder in the Southern States."

"I talk of giving no quarter," said he flushing, "when bad men have made a most unrighteous attempt to subvert a good government. Every man's influence should sustain the government

which protects him. Family and church can only exist under government."

"Alas for me where family supplies a motive!"

"Major Duane," concluded my interlocutor, rising energetically, "organizations like mine can't be allowed to think aloud. Let me but say that in these troublous times, he who is not wholly for us is against us. I have the honor to deliver these papers of instruction to you."

"Which, according to your statement and my conscience," said I, "I cannot have the honor to receive." With which self-dismissal I left the Union ranks.

I satisfied myself that in refusing to fight the Confederates, I by no means intended to ally with them, and proceeded to give away the military effects I would no longer need. With affectionate regrets for the past, I retained one service-worn uniform and tarnished saber, little dreaming the part they were to play in my fate.

Early orphaned and growing up without the companionship of womankind, I had unconsciously tried to supply the atmosphere I missed

by certain little feminine softnesses of my own. Thus, I never had the heart to donate my cast-off garments to the poor in any but perfect condition. I had been wont to call in the tailor's aid on such occasions, but in deciding that I could not fight a fellow-countryman on any issue, I had resigned not only ambition but income. Being ever a provident soul, I therefore sat down surreptitiously with the housewife of leather and needles which served me for one of flesh and blood. I felt as if I had been spied upon with mocking eyes when interrupted to receive a three-cornered scalloped note of pink color and lavender perfume.

"Come," it ran, "and eat goose with us tomorrow (Michaelmas) at 5:30. The children send you a warm embrace. Sweet, sweet kisses from Daisy to the major. Patty."

I read between the lines that the step I had taken was known and approved. For did not Patty always express her sentiments through her children? And was I not to dine at an hour when those bits of herself could be present and demonstrate what she had told them of me? I

laughed softly to myself, as in the innocence of my warmed heart, I committed the extravagance of putting a pair of gloves and a handkerchief in a pocket of each of my predestined soldier suits.

I did not neglect to line my own pockets the next day with a pecking for Patty's chickens and chose a stock of colt's foot candy and cardamon seeds as the most likely to be favorites with an old-fashioned bachelor and not too revealing of my foolish preparations. I started up Park Avenue to the capacious house in Thirty-sixth Street, which John Dolliver had built for his young wife. The pink note was scenting the vest pocket over my heart. I was as unconscious as its writer that, in accepting its invitation, I had taken up a challenge to a campaign so inimical to my views and habits of life that, in comparison, the one from which I had withdrawn would have been daily bread.

A ring at Patty's door, a friendly charge with young arms and legs from Patty's children, and all my faculties were on the alert for a jolly evening; but John Dolliver gave me a solemn

greeting. He smoothed his gray hair with a nervous hand and looked at me over his high crest collar and stock with a gloomy air not at home on his kind face. No honester, finer-minded man ever walked than he, and none more devoid of humor. Patty's brown eyes smiled at his foibles with a wholesome candor that whetted rather than hindered the astonishing affection with which—a small, quick-footed Hebe—she flew to meet his wishes.

She admired him over and over again in the group of speaking images with whom she had presented him. She was, I flattered myself, considerably jealous that I had stolen from him some of the attention of that Daisy of "sweet, sweet kisses," whose tiny fist was, beyond my reckoning, to have its hold on the threads of my destiny.

It held for me on this occasion one of those gifts ladies take the liberty of presenting to ineligible bachelors—a pair of embroidered silk canvas suspenders with white kid loops. Why it should be considered no insult to thus accuse a lone wayfarer of unmanly tastes, I have never

discovered. To be sure, this particular embroidery was as inimitable as it was infantile.

It lies before me now with a pair of outrageous slippers, a velvet card-case, and a knitted purse, unworn but aged by time. I feel again dimly, as I look upon them, the too great familiarity of sympathy they expressed. I turn over the child's gift and see its faded ribbon lining sewed on with gouging stitches. My pang of wounded vanity is once more soothed—I am back in Patty's "poor closet," whence the ribbon was procured. I inhale the fragrance of cedar in walls and shelves. I am made one of an innocent little family, all merry but the founder, as they unpack a box of gay remnants from John Dolliver's trade with southern planters.

Here are hot-colored stuffs suitable for bandana ladies; substantial pieces of linen which I am convinced even Patty's generous hands cannot wholly will to charity; sample-books for the children's patchwork; and mammoth stockings manufactured for a family of Alabama giants whose martial legs have gone to the war and require stouter buskins than balbriggans.

The children seize upon the stockings for Santa Claus time, in pathetic faith that what has been, always will be.

"Choose me an evening dress, Paul," says Patty, her pretty, round arms extended from their sleeves about a huge bundle, her brown eyes smiling at me.

I select a chambray the color of watermelon pulp with suggestions of green rind striping the red pink. My choice is greeted with derision. Patty's husband shares her mirth as she makes a great display of repacking the rejected dress in the bottom of the box and pins a paper to it with the inscription, "For Paul Duane's Bride." Patty's children join in jeering at me, they know not why. Certainly, I think to myself, these at least are not conscious that they are scoffing at my hopeless estate. In the midst of my humiliation, John Dolliver, Junior, babbling unnoticed among the spoils, suddenly lifts his chubby hands and crowns his mother with a widow's cap. The father snatches it away and tramples it under foot.

The shadow of a coming event is in the air.

As yet its deadly surety hangs fire between the omens of nuptials and widowhood, but in one of those tokens lie the seeds of revolution. The startled children feel it in the father's unfamiliar temper. There is a sudden silence over the box fated to be the last of those by which good John Dolliver loved to link his young wife even to his business. A certainty of tears is presaged by the quivering of little lips and the pattering of little feet to the mother. I seize my friend Daisy by the hand and beat a hasty retreat.

My economy had often been affronted by the sentimental folly of those boxes. My good friend had a marshal in the South, Gaines O'Barr, to distribute the orders he exported there, and receive cotton and other payment. Well I knew O'Barr, and well I knew those remnants were never returned through O'Barr's hands without toll—a slight symptom of the danger which I saw enlarging year by year. I was inwardly storming at this blindness of the chief to the underling's encroachments and my helplessness in the matter, when the small girl at my hand demanded attention.

"I think it's time Sandy sang a song to Goldy," said she, shaking her yellow tresses.

Sandy heard her with gratification. He had talked but little in his day and kept his scoldings for his own heart. His voice was true and mellow. He was aware that it might have been his fortune in social circles, had he but the grace to forget the sandy, freckled head and bony length that went with it.

Between those walls where hospitality had made even furniture and ornament beloved, he could warble freely enough and sweetly and acceptably. In the lighted parlors, so speaking of life, so soon to be silent, the tall ex-brave and the tiny bud of promise marched up and down singing to their mockers in the mirrors. Sandy, thinking of the couple upstairs, of his own lack of ties perhaps, sang on this wise:

"La vie est un fleur, l'amour en est le miel
C'est la colombe unie a l'aigle dans le ciel
C'est la grace tremblante a la force appuyée
C'est ta main dans ma main doucement oubliée,"

Goldy sang Cock Robin. Later on she

escaped downstairs to add a verse she had forgotten. Father and mother had left me again, were together in the tender intimacy of the nursery good-night. With scant petticoats and her hair in a whirl of plaits, she made an unmaidenly avowal of her affection. Shamelessly rifling my pockets as a reward for her declaration, she fell asleep upon my knee, absorbed in colt's-foot.

"Never mind, major. Wait till she is older and I will give her to you," said her father, as Patty bore down upon me with laughing ferocity and carried off her lost lamb, sweet and sticky, "and yet"—he paused, listened for the last echo of Patty's footfall, and resumed in a low voice—"that might mean another young wife running the risk of a long widowhood."

"This implies strong faith in a young wife's devotion to a memory," thought I half amused.

"The father lives in the children," said my companion, as if answering my thought, looking at me sternly over his high collar.

He rose, turned down the lights one by one, and drawing his chair close to mine, continued

in the same subdued tone, "Possible separation is a sore subject."

"Absence makes the heart grow fonder," I quoted, but he waved such lightness away with that well-kept hand of his.

"War is the scourge of homes, Duane," said he. "I usually keep the rebellion for the privacy of my own heart, but the weight there is great. I do not know when or where the exigencies of business may call me these times." I felt the dawning of a demand upon me and willingly jumped to attention long before the command, which indeed John Dolliver did not lay upon me openly till days had passed.

"You know," he went on, "my people gave me to understand that they considered the family pretty well made up when I announced my intentions with regard to Patty." I knew well the loss the generous bachelor had been to them. "I cannot look to them for protection for her." He looked at me earnestly in the room's twilight, and if I was awkward at responding in words, I saw that he did not fail to read in my eye that I was the emergency

mittances are not coming from O'Barr and I am obliged to raise money on my own accommodation paper. That too at a time when everything sells for cash and very little on credit. I cannot command ready money to buy, and I am going to lose the opportunity to sell Coats' thread for ninety cents a dozen and cases of prints for four hundred dollars a piece that used to be worth a hundred and fifty dollars." He stared at me in the dim light as if he could not believe the fact, as if he expected me to contradict it.

"If I had but the cash—" said I.

"Why haven't you?" he exclaimed, seizing my hand. "Why doesn't God give wealth of purse where there is wealth of heart?"

"Perhaps I need the tact and grace to spend it," said I.

"Bah!" said he. "Let the gentleman of manners go when the gentleman of principles is by." The compliment struck my sensitiveness as doubtful. "Would you believe it that with the mortification of prospective insolvency in the air, O'Barr suddenly finds it financially

man he wanted. "I declare," he proceeded, "I worry sometimes till I feel numb." He started in alarm as he looked down at his precisely gaitered foot and perceived a loose button. "The last year," said he, "has told upon me fearfully, mentally and physically. I feel it all the more from the previous unbroken unity of my life and purpose."

He drew himself up and settled his chin in his collar after the manner which dubbed him Sir John at his tailor's and the Duke at the market where he sometimes accompanied Patty and increased expenses against her will. John Dolliver pressing dainties on his love when he took her a-fairing, was a sight to see. Alas! for the bittersweet of memory!

"Mine has been a credit number one, Paul," said he to me on that momentous evening, "a signature always good."

"Through famine, pestilence and war," I interjected.

He smiled but shook his head. "Everything is depreciated for me but taxes—they are brisk and heavy enough," he responded sadly. "Re-



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judicious to favor a certain city, uses the firm name to take up this note and sends it to me to raise money on?" I could easily believe. He drew the paper from his pocket. "Look at that list of Confederate indorsements," said he indignantly, "and tell me where I can present them in the North with any hope of negotiation."

I looked at the amount of the note. "Present them to me, Dolliver," said I impetuously. "Let me be a grain of sand in your world."

"Never, boy, this way," said he. But I insisted. I could reserve the narrow income which would keep me. We went to his study and settled it then and there.

"You must permit me to take the note up before maturity," said John Dolliver. "Yours shall be the first claim whatever happens. And Paul, my friend, I have long wished for you in civilian life. Now you are there, shall we make it, Dolliver & Duane, when the war is over (God speed the time), and settle O'Barr between us?"

Nothing could give me greater pleasure. I had a new sense of anchorage.

"You know, Paul," added my friend, "Wife and I made up our minds we would never take slaves in payment from our Southern customers, and we have stuck to our premises. All the same, the Federals have burned bale after bale of cotton marked with my name. And now the Confederates are threatening to confiscate my property in the South because I do not live permanently there, though I have done business there and nowhere else for twenty years. Yes. Twenty years, my dear sir." He sighed and rose as he heard Patty's returning steps.

"It is pleasant," said he solemnly, grasping my two hands, as I rose with him, "to receive cheerful help from a friend, but humiliating after a business of twenty years." My pride was somewhat nettled, but he added in a tremulous whisper: "Pray that I may not come to extension or compromise. Whatever happens to me personally, good friend, I know that you will share my memory with my heart's treasure."

Patty entered, beaming, and I slipped the note into my bosom.

"This has been a happy home, Paul," were

his last words as we parted that night. I did not know how truly it was a parting.

"And is, Paul," added Patty—dearest friend fated to be dearest foe.

"And shall be," said I stoutly, going home to study the note against my breast keeping company with Patty's innocent pink challenge to my fate.

I was astonished to see Clay Monroe's name among the indorsers whose signatures I had but glanced at before. The document was from a city far away from his home, still farther from the location of the regimental company in which his own prominent position had been a matter of extensive bragging. I had thought myself accurately posted as to his personal and family history. I knew of no connection of his in that city. Yet John Dolliver had assured me that the projectors of the note had pledged themselves to raise the money for the war straits of the city's government because they were all nearly concerned in it as property holders, local merchants, and so forth. I will call the city Sweet Bay in memory of the once famous beauty

of its boulevard under white-cupped trees, now shelled and blasted by its enemy's fire.

I felt the finding of that name but an addition to the bewilderment with which I realized my possession of the paper and myself a man no longer of calculation, but of impulse. I went to bed with a throbbing head and dreamed a forecasting dream in which I marched as sentry before a bower of roses where John Dolliver had hidden Patty. In vain I tried to defend her from the attack of a hostile troop of horsemen, and awoke in deathly moisture as their leader broke in the bowery door and turned to mock me with the laughing, glancing eyes of Clay Monroe.

"You need a change of air to brace you up," said an acquaintance the next morning, eying my gaunt face. "Take a trip to Canada. Lots of Confeds are flocking there. You'll have a warm welcome."

"You quite mistake my position on the war question, sir," said I, walking away. "I have taken neither side."

"Look out," was the prophetic retort sent

after me. "There's mischief standing between two fires."

The day after that came a summons, sharp with anxiety, from John Dolliver, as he hurried South to look after the threatened property of which he had spoken to me. In the guardianship to which he called me the days dragged, freighted with alarms. Winter had set in when he advised me that he had been warned of a similar threatening of confiscation from the North of his New York possessions.

"As you love me," he wrote in post-haste, "close up and take my wife to Montreal."

The happy home, ungarnished and disposed of, never did earthly guardian labor harder for the comfort of a charge. It was worth while, thought I, with the first glow of returning health and the satisfaction of kind deeds performed, to have laid aside greater ambitions and to be simply the friend of the helpless. I turned to Patty for my well-earned thanks as we crossed the St. Lawrence in a sleigh, borders of Christmas pines marking our path over the frozen water.

"The little ones are warm and happy as polar cubs," said I, leaning toward her to see her smile.

Tears were running down her face.

"Life without the shelter of John's dear presence seems such an impossible thing," was all she had to say. Ah me!

CHAPTER II.

THE MAID OF DESTINY.

I HAD been rightly informed about the flocking to Canada of Confederates not in service. There were many in Montreal, principally men whose business had been brought to a standstill and who had delicately nurtured children to protect from the brutal sights of war. At the hotel where I put up with John Dolliver's family I found them in goodly number and—peace and justice to their pleasant memory—a goodly company.

I never come across the fashions of those days relegated to mean and sordid surroundings—the big-flowered carpets, the chandeliers with glass pendants, or the bulky stoves which served us for heaters—without feeling that sacrilege had been committed. They are to me like cast-out letters of the dead with all their



inseparable associations made vulgar in the public gaze. Again in their remembrance I realize the sharp anxieties hidden under the gay doings of that Canada winter. Again I recall with a pang of rebellion the gay beauties and unaccustomed youth in that little carnival before their great humiliation. They went out bravely to meet toil and unfamiliar poverty, some of them to early death from deprivation, in those battles listed in the unseen records of the war.

In the hotel room assigned me, I passed many a long night in wordless sympathy with D'Aujé Trent, honorable merchant, devoted husband and father, as he trod the floor overhead in company with "carking care." The echo of his step comes to me over and over. I doubt but it fastened with its terror on his own brain never to be a moment forgotten till its fatal ending. It seemed as though he were bound to tread down the rough road he dreaded for his little lads just blithely blooming out in trousers, and for his daughters, as notable a bevy as ever were fitted to grace homes of

luxury. Patty had letters of introduction to the Trents, to Banker Ogbourne's family, and to various others of the hotel guests.

"Our Confederate circle has increased in quantity ; whether in quality or not remains to be proved," it made me hot to hear some one say.

Strange to state, I found in my new abiding-place a Federal who had resigned from the navy on the same ground as myself. We grasped hands cordially over our refusal to engage in Civil War. We were a defense for one another. We propped each other up with the righteousness of our course. We felt better able to bear gracefully numerous innuendos as to our motives and leanings in the question. Certain it is, I came across no Southerner, however high-strung his conscience, cool enough to decline punishing his opponents.

Commodore Lochlin made me at one with his family. I had a little something to say to Euphrosyne on the score of her brilliant singing, my own kept bashfully perdu. I had also the satisfaction of obtaining for Mrs. John



Dolliver the inner side of Lucy Lochlin's adventures with the Queen's Guards who shared the hotel with the strangers from the States.

Simplest and quietest of the girls in the building, she had already sent one young valiant off the field apparently mortally wounded, and was now vibrating between two officers of distinction. I wonder if she has ever had any secret regret for her final decision, if she has ever found her gentle Scotch laird insufficient as she has seen his rival mount as an eagle and survey the whole British army from his lofty perch? But no. With her sweet, childlike figure before my mind's eye, I cannot accuse her of a moment's yearning for lost opportunity. I have seen her contented as a cottager with her children and her sewing-machine, keeping fresh in the midst of home courtesies finer than any to be found in the circle of public ambition.

The only thing to be regretted is that two dispositions of paramount amiability should have locked together and not been apart to diffuse their light in this uneasy world. The only thing to wonder at is the mystery of

woman's power, why it does not lie with those who crave it most. For example:

The dining room of our Montreal hotel provided but two tables. One was allotted to civilians. At the other sat forty-two of the Queen's Guards, some of them supported by their families. We were one in fellowship. The rising of a dame at our table was the signal for every Britisher to spring to his feet with military precision. The effect was very chivalrous and ornamental in that bare room. I found that it was so considered by my neighbor at table, the widow of a West Indian governor. It seemed to give her a delightful sense of prominence and power to evoke the attention. She made it a habit to leave her meals unfinished and roped me also into the homage, for, unwarily, I jumped to open the door for her exit. Too late I discovered I had become part of a chronic joke.

I do not know that premonition would have altered my behavior. I trust not. I think I had a due amount of manly pity for my lady as she simpered daily into increasing familiarity,

toying with her hair, evidently not hers by birthright, and playing with the swansdown at her withered throat and wrists as she pecked at her food. She had a native apple-blossom complexion any girl might have envied, but she seldom got credit for its genuineness, poor soul, it looked so uncommonly like waxwork among her numerous fabrications. She was fresh from her West Indian coffee plantation, or rather half preserved.

"My estate is nearly four thousand feet above sea level," said she, one day.

"Ah!" said I, "I have heard the climate of the central heights is superb—remarkably favorable to longevity."

She looked up at me reproachfully.

"Not that you needed to take that into consideration," I added in blind haste, as she rose, shaking her head at me.

"Don't worry," said she archly. "Our only white chevaliers were our rector, a mile away, and a medical officer, on the edge of the district. We are accustomed to standing up for ourselves—Tostie and I."

I had been all along so conscious of the attention Mrs. Victor attracted to me and so absorbed in meeting her attacks with the correct mixture of civility and reserve, that I had taken but little note of the young girl who accompanied her and sat beyond her. On this occasion she forestalled me at the door and was wrestling with its contrary knob as Mrs. Victor approached.

"You must allow me, Miss ——," said I, forgetting her singular name.

"Miss Annie Austin Carroll," said she defiantly, looking me through and through with as steady a pair of gray eyes as ever faced fire.

She carried the position, gravely passed her giddy relative through the door, and resumed her place at table. I felt that she was bristling with challenges, though temporarily cut off by the empty chair between us. I recognized her as an irregular in the social army. I did not realize how dangerous a one. I looked upon her—alas, woman much sinned against, most of all by me!—as one of those unfortunates whose mistakes are public and easily combatted. Truly, there were no shy concealments about

her to tempt one's interest. She stood expressed before the whole world. Audacity was in her light-brown hair, cut page-fashion across her forehead at a time when feminine partings and gentle waves were the vogue. Her small sharp chin held her mouth sweetly enough, but it would have been hard to imagine fit occasion for the caressing "Tostie" which some old fondling mammy had twisted out of her middle name. Nevertheless, she was not mannish.

Her dress was mad with color, mad as the semi-heathen, semi-church processions of West Indian natives, which had been the ideal of beauty before which she had been trained. She was in fact all color, all movement, a plethora of warm, physical life that wearied human sense. It was as if the fierce, passionate creature saw everything through a veil of sense, and found it impossible to alter herself to suit usages abroad. With her strong health, her amplitude of presence so remarkable in a young girl, she appeared, as Mrs. Victor had said, well able to stand up for herself. Yet I look back at her with enlightened eyes—Heaven pity me!—as

the loneliest spirit it has been my lot to meet. "Only my brother's stepdaughter, though she calls me aunt," Mrs. Victor had whispered to me as she passed out in an evident mingling of rebellion with her subjection to her young overseer.

Since they were not relatives their union was a mystery, as well as their appearance in Canada. I suspected the younger woman of liking the older woman's society for the sake of enforcing her strong will on a weak one. As to Miss Tostie Carroll's suspicions of my fooling her aunt, I was only amused to imagine them. I may as well state here that she soon dismissed them. No one has ever been able to compliment me long on my possibilities as a *Lothario*. It must have been as early as on this occasion that I began indefinitely to consider the thought of influencing Tostie's character through mine. Why else does the odor of an apple always stir within me a memory of defeat, and why do I shrink from hearing Montreal famed for those apples which I first tasted that day?

It was a beautiful conception—to start out

with a calm self-confidence to draw this proud, untutored being to me, stamp my noble image on her, and so wake her higher faculties without incurring a counter obligation or lessening my own excellence. But it was another than I who was to add fragrance of character to this thorny rose. And it was with a plum, not an apple, that she tempted me. Some one had been up to Quebec and had found plums from the isle of Orleans, kept in their natural state.

"The Major has not had any," said the discoverer, as his delightful find circulated at the table and paused before my enemy. She coolly saved herself the weight of the dish by passing me a plum on the hollow of her hand. Her hand was as childish as her act, thin and tanned. She made me feel as if we were out doors in an orchard. I had the bad manners, as she saw, to reserve the plum for Patty Dolliver's Daisy, which little lass was to accompany me on an errand that afternoon.

There was every prospect of my being booked for the whole winter in Montreal, and life at the hotel soon palled upon me. The merriment



there which tried to cover up a world of anxiety, was worse than sham living or rusting out. One felt a fever in the air as if one were on the edge of a volcano. It was therefore with great satisfaction that I received from an old school-fellow living in the city a position on his newspaper. He dignified me with the title of Literary Editor, and I devoted myself to selecting, compiling, translating, and such light editorial writing as was within my capabilities. I was also assigned the task of visiting and reporting on public institutions.

Having given a week in Protestant establishments, I had begun a tour of those of Roman Catholic origin. The happy thought of taking a little child with me had eased my natural stiffness and procured me, I was sure, a better welcome in conventual circles than all my letters of introduction. On the particular afternoon in question we had a very happy time. The smaller of us, it is true, mistook the cots in a long dormitory for little white graves, but a motherly French nun took the frightened tot on her knee, banished all tears with a bunch of

Erie grapes, and sang a little song which she called an ancient *ave*. It seemed to me a lullaby. It was very interesting to me for my newspaper. I make it go like this in English. I am aware that I spoiled it somewhat:

“O heaven’s one infant, why wander this way?
The water-wolf gnaws at the ice in the bay;
No birds to Thee flying, no boat for Thy crying—
Why wander this way?
The wind’s harp is moaning, the naked trees groaning,
O, heaven’s one infant, why wander this way?
Marie Mère, ayez pitié!

“O, see the white Mother in sanctity dressed!
O, warm is the snow of her holy white breast!
White rose of Mont Royal, sweet queen of the loyal,
In sanctity dressed.
Her smile all-consoling, the winter controlling,
O, see the white Mother in sanctity dressed!
Marie Mère, pour nous priez!

“O, see the child held on the white Mother’s heart!
She stretches His arms to His death’s bitter part.
His flaming love lighted, where close He has plighted
The white Mother’s heart.
The ice-thorns are falling, the sheep’s bells are calling,
O, see the Child held on the white Mother’s heart!
Marie Mère, Mère de Dieu!”



It occurred to the sister doubtless, in the emergency, because of its caressing tune which unfortunately remained with the comforted little alien though its religious lesson escaped her. She went out prepared only for the world, was charmed with the attentions she received in a boy's school, and walked thence hand in hand with a good-natured follower of Saint Sulpice to his cathedral. Our way was paved with snow and ice, the air twenty-four degrees below zero, the sun sinking in cold yellow.

"See the sleigh full of suns," said the child gayly, pointing up to a load of pumpkins on the road high above the sidewalk.

"Three hundred pounds weight, some of them," said the priest carelessly. "Twice round a Toronto pumpkin, once round a blessed brother's waist," he added laughing.

The melody of his laugh, the purity of the voice encaged in his unbeautiful body were enough to make one weep. Surely they were the triumph of spirit over clay, and the grave freed his real self from an unwelcome burden.

They were to me the chief beauty of the dull old chapels through which they echoed as he showed the way. He fairly sang as we looked out from the towers and he exulted in the seignory of his brotherhood over the island. The gentle undulations of its white coteaux were radiant hills of Zion to him.

There was a special service that afternoon which has escaped my Protestant memory, but I waited patiently to hear my friend take part in it. He led a troop of boys in singing and lovely was the trumpet of salvation they had to follow. Toward the end of the vespers he brought them to a side shrine near us. As they knelt and rose, knelt and rose, their scarlet and white cassocks gleaming through a cloud of incense, their voices rang out too strong, too clear, too much for the young lamb beside me.

She burst into song—alas! a parody of the nun's. She further rushed with all her might and main into some infant ditty about little drops of water (she had been interested in the font of holy water at the entrance) set to a dancing little tune which made one imagine a

foot in the air at the end of every other line and which she carried remarkably well. A hand touched my shoulder.

"Kindly keep your little charge quiet," said a voice in my ear, but there was no quiet after that for her insulted spirit. She ran away from me up and down the nine aisles of the cathedral till she fled into the street and into the arms of Tostie Carroll whom she refused to leave. Now I had no recollection of having heard any mention whatever of Miss Carroll's individualities. Where she had acquired any knowledge of me or why, I could not imagine. She attacked me at once however.

"I have been told," said she "that you were just like President Lincoln about making children love you, but—" and she walked on without another word, my fickle charge clinging to her hand.

She wore a velvet Scotch cap with a silver brooch, little bugles dangling on her forehead and rosettes covering her ears. Her long coat was scarlet with white buttons. Montreal was rampant in scarlet and Scotch caps that winter,

The child was in scarlet even to gloves. As the couple marched before me, they were saluted again and again by British cavalymen flying by in scarlet plumage, while I tagged on behind somber in togs and spirit.

We were late. Daisy should have been at her supper an hour before, but her new guardian made her one of a flock of children who were building a snow man before the entrance of the hotel. Never was there better or more plentiful modeling material for the Santa Claus that was going up. I, at last, being as determined as my rival and taller, tossed Daisy up to my shoulder and made off with her.

She pleaded to warm her hands at the red-eyed stove in the upper hall, straightway slipped on her snowy feet, fell against the great hot box and burned her arm. Carron oil made her all right, but what was to heal me of all the blows of tongue that beat the air and me before the accident had well occurred? Patty was wild with dread of a scar which happily did not follow. I thought we had settled down to an



admirable composure when she suddenly burst into a passion of tears.

“Oh, I do want John!” she cried.

Gracious! I had not expected to attend Euphrosyne Lochlin’s regular weekly musicale, but I rose forthwith and made a bee-line for it. Tostie was executing the piano in as heartless a manner as it has been my fate to hear, though her performance was wonderfully brilliant. She was supposed to be accompanying Euphrosyne’s canary trills. She suddenly grew weary of the repeated encores which she felt her hostess did not at all attribute to her undeniable embellishments of the songs. She left the piano with a farewell crash. No persuasion or reproach for upsetting the program would take her back till my inferior help was put in service. Then this wild tigress retreated to her first position. I had thought the company fairly well satisfied with me, but she took my place. Her face reddened as she looked at me. I was mystified.

“You remind Tostie of our rector at home,” said Mrs. Victor as I happened to take a chair

near her. "A dear good man he was, though he was not much to look at. You'd be surprised a girl like Tostie would care for him, but she could not bear the thought of the slightest reproof from him. She never obeyed any one else. I need him to manage her this minute. I wonder—" she paused and looked up at me anxiously. Then during a lull in the music her voice came out clearly—"There's a tender kindliness about you, Major Duane, that makes me long to confide in you."

I shuddered. I hated confidences. However, I had already calmly endured being called "the Victor's Victim" and the "Victor's Chevalier." I felt I could not recede now without disrespect to an old woman.

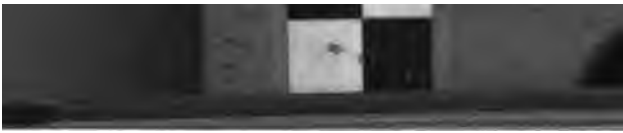
"After 7 o'clock to-morrow evening," she said *sotto voce* as we separated. "I shall be alone in my parlor and I should enjoy seeing you in that quiet way."

I found her laid out on a lounge, arrayed in a scarlet gown and lilac boots. She was strewn with letters which she assured me were all love-
notes.

"This sharp air has a vivifying effect and I say very naughty things, major," was the startling declaration with which she opened our interview. I need not have been embarrassed for a reply. She was a capable monologist.

"The air has certainly reformed this mean head of mine," she continued, toying with the curls of the wig in which her head was enclosed. "My headaches at home were beyond words to tell. As to sympathy from Tostie"—she paused expressively—"I really thought I should come to the 'hairless and cappy age' before my time. Would you believe it, Major Duane, that in your honor I allowed myself to be *coiffé* this evening, false front *crépé*, turned over *my own*, the string concealed by a beautiful band of tortoise-shell, comb of same? I suffered it, my dear friend, for just ten minutes then tore it all off. I throw myself upon your chivalry to take me just as I am."

I murmured an incoherent answer, and the poor fool shook her head coquettishly at me till it was as loose as a fly's and gave promise of never stopping.



"It would not be so hard to come down to a cap," she said, clinging to her monomania, "if the lace in market was becoming. Can you tell me if it is true that Cluny is in vogue in New York? It goes so well with rich hair. And are collars really a little pointed? But what have I to do with such elegance? I may as well go home and resign myself to a life of barbecues and orange trees. With my smallest coffee crop at three hundred and fifty hundred-weights, I am without even the necessaries of a lady." Tears actually stood in her eyes. "As for Tostie—half our income must be sacrificed to a point of honor nobody sees but herself, and she puts me under the painful obligation of borrowing from her, for, of course, her personal expenses cannot equal mine."

I was touched for the girl. I had misjudged her. I was curious concerning this point of honor.

"And she has put me also," said Mrs. Victor, "into a sad state of mortification. I had thought all was smooth between her and one in whom I feel great interest. I am deeply pained

to find there is nothing whatever of the matter in existence, and she has unnecessarily wounded the feelings of one on whom I am in a measure dependent. But my lady does not know why my doctor insisted on the air of Montreal for me." A look of triumph almost vicious came over her weak face.

"Do you know anything about Sweet Bay?" she asked abruptly.

"Nothing," said I, pulsing with interest.

"We sell most of our coffee there by the cargo," she added, assuming a careless tone, though her eyes were sharp on me. "It must be a long journey from Montreal, must it not?"

I gave her an approximate estimate of the length of time consumed.

"One must have fortitude," she said, half aloud and sighing. "I am far from my husband's lawyer, who has charge of my estate. He is in Virginia, where you know my husband came from originally, and the poor, dear old soul is, I fear, a little incapable from a cataract in his eyes. He has to wait 'like patience on a monument' till the sight is all gone before any-

thing can be done to them. And now, dear major, for the humiliating side of this delightful visit. I am always in the *via dolorosa* of asking favors from the good and kind which I cannot repay."

I turned hot and cold.

"What is your impression," she continued, "of the servants of this hotel? Are they courteous and honest for a lone woman to deal with? I have a black satin sacque and a purple silk dress it is really necessary for me to dispose of."

My heart leaped with relief. I at once mentally clothed Patty's mulatto nurse, Pearl, with the articles mentioned. My monetary arrangement with Mrs. Victor was eminently successful. I would have escaped from the snare shorn but in high glee, if I had not found I was obliged to carry off the booty myself for the sake of secrecy. Still I consented to do that merrily enough, picturing my advent in Patty's apartments and her hearty laugh; but as I strode down the corridor I heard a light foot on the stairs and barely escaped a meeting with Tostie.

Here was a young and sensitive creature to

be shamed by the possible gossip of the hotel. I turned shortly into my own room, and flung the garments into my trunk and snapped the key on them. I had my laugh, though. How I laughed, innocent tool of circumstance that I was! Unfortunately, it did not occur to me that I had a right to look in the pocket of a woman's dress when it belonged to me.

CHAPTER III.

ENTER THE SPIRIT OF CONFUSION.

"I REST quietly on your friendship," Mrs. Victor found frequent occasion to say to me, and I appreciated the appeal for secrecy conveyed in her glances between me and her niece. She did me the honor to send me to fetch the latter home one evening from the ice rink.

"Tostie will take advantage of my maid and stay late," she said. "I have such confidence in your control over her, major, you know, for the reason I have told you. I am sure if I could have had your help in the unfortunate affair to which I have alluded, it would have turned out differently. If anything should occur to bring it on again it will give me great courage to think I have your support."

Having been thus adopted, willy-nilly, as a lifelong champion in one quarter, I was imme-

diately assailed from another. Lord Robin, having reluctantly but wisely decided upon those tactics which ultimately brought him to victory, begged me to take a trivial excuse to Miss Lucy Lochlin and escort her home with Miss Carroll in the hotel sleigh. I had, in fact, achieved an unexpected and unpleasant social triumph. The matrons looked upon me as a highly desirable and by no means dangerous mentor of maidens, and the maidens looked upon me as an of no-account ally of parents and guardians.

"You are such a sober fellow, Duane," said the commodore, "you might risk all the conventionalities, and no one would accuse you. Why don't you seize your opportunity? Strike out and have your fun."

His words were echoing in my head and hurting my pride as I stood at the door of the rink waiting for the lady of the scarlet coat and bugled cap. She was a lesser light among the brilliant uniforms of the numerous military in circulation. The music of the band tortured me with a thousand emotions inexpressible with

an individual such as I, and but half welcome. It struck Tostie as a sea wind strikes a sail. She balanced to it on her skates and the keels of those little steel boats seemed of themselves to skim over the sheet of ice. I hailed her, but a hand caught hers, and she flew from me and duty. Her arms were suddenly linked at length and she was one of a broadside storming my lonely position. The broadside changed into an Indian file. The leader halted as a center and the followers spread in a circle to trace eights and double-eights from and to him. I could not but join a murmur of applause at the precision of time with which the whirlers met at their starting point.

With dancing eyes and glowing cheeks Tostie half turned to do her part in a repetition, but suddenly changed her mind. She detached herself in a single reckless curve from the figure and skated backward till she stopped breathless at my side and steadied herself by her hand on mine. Miss Lochlin, very much huffed at her young laird's behavior, refused to join us and chose her own company home. I knelt to

remove Tostie's skates. It seemed a pity to imprison her feet, restless from the taste of skating, in the robes of a sleigh. She was no more to me than a child, not as much as Daisy Dolliver.

"Would you prefer to walk?" said I.

"Wouldn't I, though?" said she. She put her arm in a sociable way, through mine, and clasped her hands in her muff.

"I am so glad Aunt Medora sent you," she began to my pleasure, but continued, "because she won't be watching for my return. I want to see the moonlight on the frozen harbor."

The air was a disorder of sleighbells and voices, bumping runners and trotting hoofs. The thought of the dumb river was a strong temptation. My tall companion walked beside me, firm as a Forty-second Highlander. I had a curious pleasure, something I had never risked with a lady before, of marching with her over numerous obstacles in our path. She was very much gratified at her own fortitude in keeping step.

"You ought to brevet me your captain-gen-

eral," said she, "but I suppose your staff is complete with Dollivers. Do you ever take Mrs. Dolliver out in the evening?"

I never had. I wondered what Mrs. Dolliver would think of this escapade. The moon was eclipsed by a cloud just then. For awhile we stalked along, dimmed and silent figures. The white light burst out again as we reached the deserted wharfs, making fairy ships of the craft laid up along the shore.

"If I only could wish one full of treasure and send it sailing," exclaimed Tostie, pausing, her pretty chin tipped up from her fur necklet, her gray eyes smiling on the glittering, ice-coated decks and spars.

"Where?" I asked.

"To people I want to help and can't," she answered. I felt her shiver. "Let us go on," she said, "I imagine I hear the water gasping and heaving under the ice. I feel as if I had imprisoned some one who was breaking loose after me, like one of our West Indian blood-hounds."

She had become suddenly limp. I longed to

question her, but could not take advantage of her candor. The pity is I did not. We stood alone together in an opportunity never to come again. There was no human sound upon the air. In the intense, still coldness, I could hear her watch ticking against my arm in an inner pocket of her scarlet coat, and the tiny jingle of the bugles on her cap.

"I wonder what it is to be poor and hidden away," she added. A sudden fretfulness overcame her. "Oh, I am sick of Canada," she exclaimed. "My heart is freezing in my body."

I wondered was she homesick for her discarded swain. "Then it's the physician of souls can help you," I ventured.

"You mean Mr. Geffrard, I suppose," she answered.

"Your old rector?" I asked.

"Old?" she fired up. "Mr. Geffrard old? Do you consider yourself old, Major Duane? Mr. Geffrard is younger than you, and is younger in spirit than in looks."

I withdrew my weapons of spying with the conviction that there were two rivals tilting for

her hand, since Mr. Geffrard was evidently not the lover she had despised.

"Aunt Medora's husband," said she, continuing the conversation, "loved Mr. Geffrard as his son, and his brother—" she hesitated and looked at me sharply. "Did Aunt Medora ever speak to you of her brother-in-law?" she asked.

Aunt Medora never had.

"I can't imagine why people want other people's confidences," Tostie exclaimed testily, which I considered about as inexcusable a piece of pert injustice as a crude young girl could utter. I must have shown my opinion in my face, but she surprised me by adding hastily and pleadingly. "Don't be angry with me. If you knew all, you would not, and Aunt Medora is so painfully communicative."

I hastened to assure her that her words had not affected my friendship in the least.

"Come in this warm little shop and let us break bread on it," said I in a sudden impulse.

Into Laporte's—smallest, cleanest, and most Gallic of Montreal's bakeries—we accordingly went. We broke a hot shining *brioche* between

us, and the girl further regaled herself with *coquilles* as hungrily as a child. She paid for her own rations with a determined persistence in our free and fraternal equality. She further purchased some little heart-shaped cakes dotted with rosy sugar, explaining with difficulty her wants to Monsieur Laporte in the fluent but marvelous negro French of a certain island she had frequented.

"You know," she said, apologizing to me as I came to her aid, "I have been taught a little of everything, and nothing well. Tie this bag of fancy hearts to Daisy's crib for her to find in the morning."

I induced her to present them herself the next afternoon which would be Sunday, a day on which Patty had a peculiar use for such things. She appeared in Patty's sitting room with a timid reluctance which surprised me, as did her sigh of relief when she perceived me among several visitors and sat down half-hidden behind me in a chair close at my elbow. Anything more childlike and docile than her attitude would have been hard to imagine, the

graceful slope of her shoulders and pretty round of her arms revealed by her flat sleeves. She was a refreshing contrast to Patty, with whose disposition hers seemed for the time to have changed places.

Patty had a Sunday School for her own children and their little friends every Sunday afternoon, original according to her limited opportunities, with refreshments instead of reward cards. The methods and text books were as diverse and changing as the volunteer teachers. Banker Ogbourne's daughters, ever ready for good works, were present on this occasion, the one who afterward won a distinguished ecclesiastic from vows of celibacy being at this time a mere child. It is astonishing to look back at the troop of brides who came out of those days of darkness to figure in notable weddings, sweeter and more delectable perhaps because of adversity and seclusion.

Miss Ogbourne having wearied herself with teaching her class "Honor thy father and thy mother," the happy thought came to her of exemplification by dictating letters of filial affec-

tion. She robbed the assembly of pencils at once and made a free search for paper in Patty's desk.

Poor John Dolliver had sent on a package of tiny envelopes—pathetic, hungry little beggars for messages of love from his children. He had made them himself. I could see him laboring at them in his solemn dignity with as big a heartache as a man in tears.

Miss Ogbourne seized on them with avidity. Daisy of the scorched right arm was in the group of scholars assigned to Miss Ogbourne, and had been making a great deal of capital out of her affliction, getting double help from the world in general. It no doubt was sad that she was unable to use one of her own father's envelopes and for the purpose he had sent them.

I perceived Patty consuming with emotion at this situation. She had lately been treating me to such an excess of Christian forgiveness that I had been overwhelmed with remorse, but she burst out now as she passed near me and caught my eye; "If God Almighty had given

you children as perfect as He has given me, Paul Duane, perhaps you too would have some compunction about returning them mutilated."

Tostie laughed softly in my ear but Patty heard her and sent her promptly to redeem her idle moments at an improvised paper black-board, while I was humiliated before the tea urn. I prided myself (in private) on being a first-class military cook. As to tea-making, I must confess I considered no one knew the boiling-point and lump-of-sugar time as well as I. My own Imperial at six dollars a pound was before me. I had determined, when donating it to Patty's reward table, that the little travelers Zionward, whether bad or good, should all have a good snack of it. Made a womanish spectacle, my ardor and talent departed.

I also had an acute, unseeing consciousness that the eyes of the young lady at the black-board were continually upon me. Turning suddenly on my heel I found not a patriarch or or saint presented to the school but my own image, admirably like and painfully unbeautiful.

"No, no," she exclaimed as I put out a threatening hand, "I want Mr. Geffrard to see himself a tea-maker." She beamed with real delight at the success of her work. "Never was anything so good," she cried out, clasping her hands ecstatically, "except himself. The length of him! And the stiffness and the seriousness of him! He thinks that lump of sugar is an infant baptism. Poor old, old, old Mr. Geffrard, blessed are you if you've nothing but your teapot!"

She ripped the paper from the wall and darted from the room, I after her.

"This for that, and no quarter," said I, holding out a plate of the rosy cakes we had bought the night before.

"An exchange of bleeding hearts?" tittered Mrs. Victor, coming down the hall.

A blaze of color swept over the girl's face and for one fleeting instant my heart was startled, but I saw her eyes were gazing beyond me.

"So it is only in war that you are a looker-on, Major Duane," said a voice in my ear.

I turned from Tostie, sore in need of a champion, from Patty's door where innocent happiness hung trembling, from Mrs. Victor whose weak hand held the balance, and looked into the face of temptation, the overthrow of my simple code of right and wrong, the laughing, glancing eyes of Clay Munroe.

I am convinced, looking back at a long life of varied experience, that the catastrophes of this vale of tears lie more than half at the door of pretty wickedness. We keep death and the prison for the open burst of crime, but what weapon of responsibility have we for the slow, insidious poisoning, the unchecked seed-sowing of what we are pleased to smile at as domestic vices? King among them, I rate evil temper, and chief among its boon companions I must place Clay Monroe, desire as I would to call him simply victim.

As we stood together in the hotel hall, the one as good a six-foot measure as the other, I knew him by a sudden flash of dormant military instinct, for the raider that he was. His moral character not equal to his talents, his con-

fidence in those talents was too great for him to feel the stress of obedience to a common law. He was continually doing many things instead of the one expected of him. Guerilla chieftain he might be, but soldier, with the superhuman longing to risk life for right, never.

If ever I had a twinge of remorse for the step I had taken, it was then, and it was sharp. To see the action one had thought so high, duplicated from a lower motive, wounds deep. For the moment, I sickened for the manly heat of battle this wild lad had deserted. Too well I knew that North and South it was not uncommon for young bucks, detailed to leave the ranks on government business at government expense, to take the opportunity for their own pleasure.

It was not difficult to guess the truth that Clay Monroe, given some such errand, of which I was to learn more, had seized the chance to pursue his passion for Tostie, abetted, for her own ends, by Tostie's aunt. Nor did I need to be told that he had met the girl in the West Indies, representing his father, the lawyer in

guardianship of Mrs. Victor's property. The West Indian bloodhound at his side, gazing up solemnly into my face with unutterable knowledge of its master, was the telltale memento of his visit.

In furthering his principal purpose he accomplished the bringing his half-blind father to Canada out of danger. He candidly confessed that the pathetic condition of the old man carried them through barriers almost incredible; but honor must be done the son for his filial devotion, the one steady, unalterable trait of his character. It seemed as though this virtue, like a sense, took an extra acuteness from the weakness of others. Its grace was, I think, as I recall that first meeting in Montreal, his chief allurements with men as with women.

Was not that the charm I felt in the beardless beauty of his face close to mine? There was a boyish appeal in his smile, a boyish smallness about his head with its crop of crisp black curls. The curls were especially black against the gray astrakhan cloth which formed the collar and border of his black surtout, dandy-like, with

cords and frogs. On the hand which he laid affectionately on my shoulder he wore a seal ring, a bloodstone intaglio of a bird in flight and singing, with a wreath of letters I did not decipher. I had ample opportunity to do so before many days had passed, for the ring came into my possession in the following manner.

I had carefully avoided reading the news of the war, and had made myself on that subject a most uninteresting companion. With characteristic inconsistency Clay was ravenous for every item of the conflict he had deliberately abandoned. He was there in spirit a good part of his time, and vented his seething sympathies on whoever came in his way. He could not brook the slightest hushing of the subject. He was so frankly importunate, yet so really deceiving. It was with me as with Tostie. He appeared to be all wounded affection, and as if his only thought was of the hand that hurt him. He was, I truly believe, unconscious that any one soever who opposed him drew him like a spell through his pride and temper, and everything else went to the winds till he felt himself

vanquisher in that quarter. Self-forgetting love or friendship he could not conceive, chivalrous and gracious though he seemed to be, and in a measure was.

With the persistence of a sensitive, spoiled child, he used to hang round the office of the paper on which I worked, watching the mail for exchanges, and wearying himself and me in his efforts to inveigle me into discussions. Never rude, always boyishly eager, and extremely handsome and captivating, he made me sorry that I was such an irritating object in his horizon. Thinking to divert his thoughts one morning when he was tackling me somewhat more closely than usual, I called his attention to a bunch of manuscripts I had unearthed from a pigeon-hole in my desk. They were heavy poetical guns in honor of the young Prince of Wales, too loyal to be rejected, too weak to face the light.

The visit of the prince to Canada was actually still present in men's minds, for some of the effusions were recent. Clay and I laughed at the prospect of their authors waiting an eternity to see them published. I could not laugh so

cruelly now, touched with a kindred complaint; but, then, not being awed by the loyalty of their sentiments, I was about to consign the whole mess to the waste-basket.

"Hold on!" Clay cried. "Here's a printed song, gotten here by mistake. Let us try it."

It was that pretty thing written and sung on the departure of the young prince from Portland. It was set to music by Barnby. We tuned the whole song, Clay's chair drawn close to mine, his arm around my shoulders. We went well together, he singing to my high tenor a sweet second with a singular feminine quality which seemed to make him leader and I follower. In singing he lost the slight huskiness his voice betrayed in speaking, and which, united with the hectic color of his face and the brilliance of his eyes, was always a petition for indulgence as a possible signal of a deadly inheritance from his mother.

We had had a little converse once about our vanished mothers. He had, as the young and unattached sometimes will, let out a good deal of fond sentiment about his loss, his need, the

when and where of the woman who was to make it up to him. I had felt he was suddenly heartily ashamed of his self-revelation, but it was not till this present occasion, so long afterward, that he tried to punish me for being his confessor.

We had sung the farewell of "Old England's Heir," his tearful blue eyes, his quivering boyish lip, his flushed boyish cheek. Times and manners! how lustily we sang the words—

"God grant that he may ever be
As good a prince as now,
Nor ever may true virtue's crown
Be lifted from his brow!"

We had come to the line, "God bless him for his mother's sake," when a sudden recollection of that other time of confidence came over us both. I met his eye with an involuntary smile. He sprang to his feet all afire, dashed his chair to the farthest corner of the room and overwhelmed me with a torrent of words.

"You're mired in this newspaper stuff," said he. "Do you know you've most taken root? Don't talk to me of wasted opportunities. I

declare you can't make me believe you have no special news from Dolliver that you ought to give out—to me, at least."

"John Dolliver sends confidential letters only to his wife," said I. "You surely don't expect me to pry into those? You know the man. You can warrant as well as I how short his pages seem to him, how he fears each letter may be his farewell to his wife."

Clay Monroe stopped in his rapid walk, stuck his elbows into his sides, spread out his hands facetiously, and said a little something about Patty and me, about the consolation John Dolliver had provided for his widow. Then it was my turn to spring to my feet and pour forth a volley of reproofs. The words that my insulted dignity mustered out were a surprise even to myself, so vain had I been of my self-control. They halted only when I realized the change I had wrought in my companion's face. I had sent all the beauty out of it.

It is an ugly thing to recall, but I was shocked to see Clay's laughing, mobile countenance take on a resemblance to the heavy, sullen face of

the dog at his side. I was not to be the only one to mark that recurring brutish look. It would have been far less hateful to have seen his passion in full play than thus veiled. He slunk from the room without a word, followed by his great bloodhound mastiff, faithful to death in the charge old Colonel Monroe had given it. It was not long till I was on the track of its huge toes in the snow.

I was vexed that I had let slip the opportunity for which I had been waiting—an allusion from Clay Monroe to John Dolliver which I could have seized upon to draw him out about Gaines O'Barr and Sweet Bay. Though I had promised John Dolliver to keep quiet and leave to him the negotiation of the bond I held, I could not but think I had a right to any information I could acquire indirectly, especially as I might thus serve my old friend whom I believed easily duped.

I was also mortified that I had let myself down to the level of one I considered a weaker vessel, and for whom I had a real liking in spite of his obvious weaknesses which I wished to

help. I followed the dog's prints to a shooting-gallery, where I had certainly no wish to be seen; but I felt mine was the responsibility of driving Clay there.

I entered, received the cold shoulder from my enemy, and lingered till the proprietor declared the gallery closed for the noon hour. He had reasons, doubtless, to fear getting into trouble. I was a suspectable idler watching for a chance to interview Clay.

Clay's dog kept his black muzzle within an inch of me, go where I would, and his master did not cease banging out his fiend of a temper with helpless shot. I may have irritated him. If I was determined to walk home with him, he was as determined I should go ahead. He began to pick up the rifles and help Charpentier place them in their cases.

The past is past. Let it moulder. It is easy for rifles to be accidentally discharged. I carry a Montreal bullet in my back to this day. No one knows of it but Clay Monroe, Charpentier, an ineffectual surgeon and one other. Pride is a miraculous draught for the feelings of the

body. As I have stated, I had once already had the humiliation of being a target for an illegitimate aim. I was too strung now to need assistance to reach home, but Clay Monroe forced his on me. His voice was choked with genuine emotion. His eyes were full of tears. He was mine while life should last. He had broken himself at my feet.

"Wear this to let me know you forgive me," said he, taking off the ring of heliotrope spotted with bloody jasper, and pressing it on my finger.

I examined the singing bird, when at last left alone in my room, and deciphered its wreath of letters—"P. C. C. L." The days were many, some sweet, some bitter, before I understood the whole legend, for Clay put aside my question about it.

I fell asleep the night of that troublous day, more deeply wounded in spirit than in body. I rebelled against the fates making a comedy of the life of a sedate, God-fearing man such as I.

CHAPTER IV.

SINS OF HOLINESS.

ONE does not usually think of the progress of this world as hampered by charity, yet the first error into which Clay Monroe enticed me was the sin of over-forgiveness. Looking back, I take it that close familiarity of a human redeemer with a sinner is death to reformation.

"Let me move my cot into your room and care for you through this trouble," said Clay eagerly. "You have a big barn of a room anyhow. I will help fill it and liven it up for you."

He looked at me with humble anxiety in his eyes. I was the king then, he the beggar; I the possible savior, he the repentant offender. The blow I had feared to give him in battle he had given me in peace. Strangely enough, with

alarms thus reversed, I never afterward had a distrust of him in connection with myself. Nothing could have been more distasteful to me than an invasion of my privacy and peculiarities, but I let him in.

"It is very gratifying to me," said old Colonel Monroe to me one day as we were alone together, "that my son has found a friend here and that the friend is you. A decade ago when Henry Clay was taken from us, the light of public life went out for me. It is lovely to me to see my own Clay draw near to one whose countenance reflects the virtues of his god-father."

A tender smile lit up his pure and melancholy face. He was for all the world like a sweet Quaker preacher or one of those French village *curés* preserved in books, who are gentle gods to women and children. The number of slaves he had once owned from an inheritance in the Carolinas, I do not care to recall. He put it that they were an immense bother to him. His plan for their cabin settlement was like a small city, his arrangement of schools and overseers

were prodigious undertakings, and had at one time a well earned notoriety. Now he had more silver on his head than in his pockets, and the orderly who waited on his person and adorned him was about the only negro of whose possession he could be positively sure.

Branch, or Olive Branch, as an insinuating mother had christened him, insisted upon being possessed till the day of his death. He eventually, in ways to be recorded, came to be my follower—very black, very dishonest, very loving and lovable. I laid him away at the age of a hundred years in a coat which had mysteriously disappeared from my wardrobe many years before. It was found among my belongings, labelled for mortuary purposes, with the memorandum that association had forced him to take it, I had mourned so beautifully in it for the colonel. My forgiveness or punishment would have availed but little, for he was as immovable in morals as the colonel was in the customs of old Virginia. In deference to his son's wishes, the latter did not wear his widower's hat with its long crape weeper, but it

hung always on the headpost of the bed in his hotel room.

"The unfortunate event," said he to me "which deprived my dear boy of his mother comes painfully home to me in this waste of snow. I am lost without my oaks and evergreens. When I wander among my trees at home, a plentiful crop on three thousand acres, they are all voices of her. Every wind that blows their leaves echoes her step and draperies. I seem to hear her mounting up to the sky as the breeze goes up through the branches. The sky comes near. Excuse an old man's sentiment, Major Duane. My wife was a young thing and I had thought to be the first to go."

Poor John Dolliver came up before me in a new aspect. I strengthened my vows to patiently protect his treasure, little wotting how she was about to fare me. She had already won an admiration from Colonel Monroe which, curiously it seemed to me, she did not return. He aimed to be conspicuously a conventional gentleman and so he was, according to old ideas.

Not a breath of ridicule could approach his client, Mrs. Victor, when he was present. He treated her as the widow of his old friend, with nothing short of homage. No matter how apparent the forgeries of her outward show or the fictions of her conversation, his reverential bows and close attention to her silliness were never baffled. His presence indeed was a new atmosphere in whatever place he entered. He had the peculiar distinction of seeming—only seeming—wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

It put a little difference between him and the rest of us Americans that he had a daughter married to a baron living in a stately but somewhat solitary castle on the shores of the Baltic. He visited her once a year. He said very little about her simply because Clay absorbed him, but people invested him with a secret about her. He had also been educated for the Roman Catholic priesthood and had changed his calling after he had received his training. The silence he considered himself in honor bound to maintain concerning this experience added to the impression of aloofness fostered by his affliction.

As he sat among us waiting to be blind before he could truly see, his eyelids always drooped over his troubled eyes, the beautiful composure of his face, that firmness often mistaken for strength, which was perhaps but an effect of his priestly discipline, might well have bred one's expectation to find in him the virility of the old saints. Yet that reckless boy of his was the barren legacy of his own life, vainly showing him that he had mistaken habits for principles. What he saw in his son—and he was never unaware of Clay's faults—he might have looked for from his own inner light. He knew right and wrong for him clearly enough, he reproved him in his own way, but he would no more have corrected the affectionate fellow openly than he would have cut off his right hand.

So proudly confident was he that a child of his must reach the right goal in the end, he would rather grant him loving permission to do wrong than save him with a touch of disgrace. His anger was all against Clay's stumbling-blocks, and to the bottom of his soul he had a

dislike to the stepdaughter of Mrs. Victor's brother, or, what was more cruelly personal, a real distaste founded on that point of honor to which Mrs. Victor had alluded.

I confess that I myself at that time judged her harshly enough, with no regard to her fiery youth and lack of guidance. I blushed for Clay as if he had been an indecorous girl, so recklessly did he put himself in the way of this confident young thing's thrust-and-parry.

"All is not over. See you do your part. Tostie and Clay are in *statu quo*," said Mrs. Victor gleefully, when the excitement and fascination of the warfare were at their height.

The part I had to do, it seemed to me, was to save the self-respect of the irresponsible fellow whom, unsought, Providence had thrown apparently under my thumb. He might be unworthy, but what was she? A young lioness, admiring one lover only till she found another more daring.

"She's all my fancy painted her,
She's lovely, though unkind,"

warbled Clay in my room.

I was fond myself of singing "Alice Lee." Its gentle melancholy suited me. I had a pensive pleasure in resigning the lovely one to another's affection. It annoyed me to hear Clay alter the words, but he continued:

"Her heart it is no other's—
I'm bound she shall be mine."

"How do you know her heart is safe?" I asked testily.

He stopped. His bright eyes regarded me with a seriousness that dumbfounded me.

"When you become my rival," said he, "I hope the Lord will take me home."

He pushed my hand fiercely away from the shoe I held, and, kneeling, pulled it on for me, for he waited on my incapacitated back like a slave. I need not have feared his ridicule as a roommate. He might have been a wife, tenderly encouraging her lord's whims.

This time he took some advantage of mine. Instead of indulging, as I had expected, in a peal of laughter at my array of boots and shoes, he threw his own among them, making common property of the whole lot, as he did of all our

belongings, thinking, alas ! that where he freely gave he might freely take. He also, being dissatisfied with the hotel service, spent an evening sprawled on the floor, polishing every heel and toe of them.

He made no jeering remark about my home-made bootjack, but after studying it quietly made it into better shape, and finished the entertainment by grinding all the occupants of my amateur carpenter-box. This from as work-hating, grandiose a young popinjay as ever lived ! Yet I doubt whether he had loved me so hard if he had been sure of my affection.

"You have had too much bread and butter. This dandy lot shows you're pining for cake, only you're ashamed to own it," said he, as he surveyed his completed task, shining in the shoe-closet. "Your bones are grand, my boy—Providence gave you the full complement—but it would do you proud to have them better covered. You want less conscience and more clover, more trimming to your bonnet and more looping to your overskirt. Then you may look out for such a pretty chin to serve as a cup for

kisses as I have found. Hold on, massa! don't you go to fire me out of the room for words that mean nothing."

He waltzed like a top away from me to the farther end of the room and administered a kick to the hound he stumbled against. I then and there aired my grievance over its name, since he continually associated it with rough words and rougher treatment.

"You're right," said he airily. "The name of Tostie is as ill-suited to the knowing old brute as it is well-suited to its original owner, whom I have often seen you frown at. Why so captious with the poor girl, Duane? Isn't she all the choicer that she proves herself too young for the show pen? She goes her own gait because she has only a fool to follow in any other. She has made a couple of awful mistakes, but they are not selfish ones. Mrs. Victor has told you about Geffrard?"

I nodded my head in a noncommittal way, my ear cocked for love affairs and mysteries.

"This Geffrard married a costie," he began. I interrupted him, my eyebrows raised inquiringly.

"A costie is the child of a West Indian white and a fustie," said he impatiently, and returned to his argument. "It was revolutionary, of course, but she was very white, very sweet-voiced, very graceful; and the man's a dear, homely saint miles above earthly considerations. She's been the making of him with her ambitions for him, but our lady Victor would not receive the communion from him, wrote to the bishop, and raised no end of a row. Tostie finds him persecuted, stands up for him like a troop, and has his child take her full name."

So Clay had no avowed rival and I resembled a homely man who had chosen a wife from the down-trodden race. Faith! I was not overgratified, antislaver though I was. Perhaps regret for this feeling of shrinking made me more tender with the future case that awaited me.

"Worse than that," continued Clay. "She ferrets out, through these Geffrards, another mess that concerns Mrs. Victor only, and pledges her money for what she calls Mrs. Victor's and

my father's honor. She has driven us on a heap of trouble and we haven't reached the bottom yet." He caught himself up abruptly. "But, of course, this is a matter you will never hear of again." He looked me sharply in the eye. "What I've sent in one ear will go out of the other."

Thus duly warned, the next morning I marched down the hall with him, arm in arm, like tall, inseparable twins, to Patty's parlor, which he called Point Comfort, and frequented on every possible pretext. His eyes sought my hand as usual when we started out. The absence or presence there of his ring was the thermometer of his amiability, and I wore it constantly with the stone turned in to escape Patty's attention. I misdoubted his devotion to Patty since I found him truckling where he had injured or was likely to injure, his better self, always fearful of losing the esteem his worse self would not suffer him to keep. Patty treated him with a motherliness which perhaps attracted him, but it sat on her youth absurdly. She took him aside on this occasion to show

him a new picture of her husband and left me with Tostie, whom she had also adopted.

It has been my observation that women are never jealous of their opposites, between whom and themselves there is no possibility of comparison. Patty had literally fallen in love with Tostie's beauty and had made up her mind the girl must do her duty to the world with it. This day Tostie was arrayed according to Patty's idea of her possibilities and seated for admiration against the background of the piano. Patty had hired a grand piano for its furnishing properties and not for its tone, and also because she could see her all children standing round it when she sang her little hymns with them.

I have been often abused for stupidity about woman's dress, but I am willing to pledge my honor Patty had transformed Tostie from a flaming orchid to a rose by means of a gray dress with a pink front. I think I can see her now, poor child, feeling the influence of her cool colors, sitting well in relief against the shining curve of the piano, her hands, loosely clasped, coming out of a pair of spreading sleeves like

inverted cornucopias. She was altogether gentle, her cheeks blooming softly, her mouth sweet above her pretty chin; and she begged me, with her gray eyes looking honestly into mine, to let her use her hands for me on the piano. For the time being, I forgot I was to show Clay the folly of his infatuation.

I wailed for Alice Lee to my soul's content, the accompaniment congenially, delightfully produced, and no flippant fellow to disturb the long and numerous verses.

"How well we go together!" said Tostie, stirring my benevolence as I realized how the cold brilliancy of her playing changed under my leadership.

What harm could I think lay in the fiber of a roughly-cut flute such as I? I was too well aware I had been denied beauty and grace for mating. I was absorbed in vanity and the benefaction to my companion of my one gift. I had no dread of misinterpretation. No fear had I, ravishing songster though I had been told I was, to thrill and trill my unused heart out to the pretty bird beside me.

"For, oh! the sweetest lass to me," my voice insisted after Alice left the keys, "Is Annie—Annie o' the banks o' Dee. Annie o' the banks o' Dee—Annie o' the banks o' Dee. For, oh! the sweetest lass to me, is Annie o' the banks o' Dee."

And so, and so, it might have gone on, "it may be for years, and it may be forever," if I had not, in the vain glory of the occasion, come out too lusciously in a ballad dear to us parlor singers of thirty years ago and over. Too nearly personal I made its thees and thines:

"I have sworn to love thee ever,
And tho' changeful years may roll,
No power on earth can sever
Thine image from my soul,"

I sang and felt the accompaniment running away from me:

"In thy girlhood's happy spring,
In the sunny tide of youth,"

I continued, and felt my eyes drawn to the far tail of the piano where Clay had appeared and held my companion's eyes with that ugly look of his.

His red lips may not have moved over his white teeth, but to me they said, "Shut up," and I obeyed. Involuntarily I leaned over the music rest and closed the song book with the gilt harp on its apple-green cover. I did wrong to Clay more than to myself, to Tostie most of all. Better had been war to the uttermost than a treaty with Tostie to soothe Clay.

It was the afternoon of that same day that as I was coming up Bleury Street from the newspaper office, Patty called me into Nottman's the photographer's. She was arranging her little regiment in a pictorial group for their dear papa, in return for his new picture with all the war difficulties under which he had procured it reflected in his anxious face. Somehow or other she put me in the background with herself, an evidence of friendship I needed to comfort me shortly after.

Tostie was in the gallery and looked at us attentively, turning away to study a picture of Clay in a showcase as I study it now standing before me on my desk. I see the battle of two selves written over the striking figure. His

glancing eyes are for once at rest, and his still mouth fine in the silent lines of his conflicting passions. His face is as beautiful in its gentle melancholy as the face of Hadrian's page. The rippling hair and graceful pose of his young head complete the resemblance, but it is all slandered by his foppish, gray bordered coat. His manly height and strength are admirable till one sees his cruel foot holding down his dog, and that quick, slashing hand of his tight upon his whip. Unfortunately the devil does not always possess us to the destruction of our looks, nor print his mark so that innocence can read it.

"What a sad pity his face changes," said Tostie absent-mindedly, casting a parting glance at the photograph as our party went out of doors.

She was again in scarlet and as gay as her coat. She dashed on ahead with the children, the wildest of them all. As Mrs. Patty Dolliver and I, far to rearward, approached the French Cathedral, we saw Colonel Monroe, tall and erect, bare his white head to the building.

We were, for the moment, absorbed in the old ex-Romanist's act of unconscious habit or memory, and did not notice who his companion might be.

Tostie had sat down at the threshold to rid her overshoe of a lump of snow. I stooped to assist her as I once had with her skates. I felt myself gripped by the waist, straightened, and swung lightly to one side. The hands that so dealt with me had been performing many kind offices for my infirm back, they had never been more gentle, but a thrill of something else than kindness went through me at their touch.

I was very hot as Clay Monroe took my place, knelt right down in fact at the girl's feet. Patty's eyes were fastened on him. The colonel's, with the sinister expression of their feeble sight, were directed immovably to Tostie as I had reason to remember a day or two after. Neither of them would help me to laugh it off, this absurd occurrence in a public street, this dragging of a punctilious mope such as I into a heady boy's love affair.

The girl startled me by looking up at me as

she laid her hand lightly on the shoulder of the fellow fumbling at the buckle of her arctic rubber. She gave me a pleading smile as if we had a troublesome child to manage between us. I could not but return it. It was the second step in our unfortunate, eventful treaty.

CHAPTER V.

COMPOUNDING A FELONY.

MAN is by nature a religious being. He may be able to put that old dictum aside even at the gallows if the crowd is big enough to applaud or contradict him; but when circumstances will not let him be either bad or good, and life is still vigorously pulsing, I doubt but he must cry for help, whatever the armor he has on.

After the cathedral episode, I made an excuse to return to my desk and did not reach the hotel till late at night. I had had many thoughts. The earth on which I had relied was moving another way. I was dizzy.

The door of my room was unlocked, the light dim. I knelt down to anticipate my nightly prayers. In the quiet I asked that a little rag of dignity be left me. If I had stripped myself

of reserve and repose in blindly becoming the rival and intimate of a youth of reckless principles, I prayed that I might so conduct myself as to better him. There my petition ended.

It had not yet dawned upon me that for this recreant's sake, I could put away the sweet, stirring thought that had come to me, that to brace his insufficient moral strength I could, without a tilt, yield him, the less worthy suitor, his pretensions to what I had begun to covet, that I could take upon myself the greatest suffering to free him from the power of evil.

I rose from my knees to distinguish, in a brightened light, my enemy seated across the room. His hands were drooping on the arms of his chair, his face was pale, his eyes were wet with tears. Moreover, he was clad in the old uniform I had retained as a keepsake, and my saber clanked at his side as he rose and stood motionless before me.

Whether he had intended to insult me or had simply come across and amused himself with my mementoes when supplying a want in his usual free fashion from my belongings, I cannot

say. In any case, he had made the relics his own. They fitted him as well as they had me. To see him so easily usurp them made me feel as if I had an interchangeable self.

I kicked against the mysterious bond growing up between Clay and myself, and at the same time, I was ashamed of my feelings. From that hour I hated the thought of my war habiliments burlesqued. I did not ask what became of them when at the end of that interview he humbly hid them after I refused to make merry over them or take them back. It was many a weary day and far away when I saw them again.

"Pray be seated," I said as he stood with every symptom of regret before me. "Do not let me disturb you. You are your own court-martial."

"I know it," said he with that candor which was the most unpromising feature of our intercourse. "It is I that knock myself about from post to pillar." He gave me a deprecating smile, pathetic now as I think of it. "Comrade—" he continued.

"Comrade?" I interrupted indignantly. He winced, bent his handsome head a little and turned without a trace of anger to the trunk whence he had procured the uniform. "At least not enemy," said he gently. "Else my tongue had been busy outside since I found where you keep your plunder." He stooped and brought up from the trunk Mrs. Victor's black satin sacque and purple silk dress.

"I am sick of joking," said I, my face burning.

"And I. This is no joke," said he, standing up to me like a preacher with his vestments over his arm. He loved to hear himself preach, he had listened to so much preaching about his own naughtinesses. "You need not tell me you kindly bought these of Mrs. Victor. I know her ways. It is my business to tell you they were not hers to sell. A whole year ago, when I was in the Indies, I saw her niece pack them to send abroad. Great glee she was in about it, but she had forced Mrs. Victor into making the present, and you see madam's nobility gave out when there was no legal claim on her. It

was to be a peace gift, you know, in that foolish affair of honor Tostie has on her mind. Now are you going to wound the girl and expose her aunt, or shall we effectually dispose of these telltales? I don't suppose you or I can alter their fashion to make them an acceptable offering now."

There he was, who ought to have been foundered in apologies, advising and helping me out of a dilemma!

"Oh, bury them out of my sight!" said I.

We sat down before our fire, and, Clay cutting them up with my saber, we burned them—good honest stuff—when women and little children were shivering for clothes on the war fields. The smoke tickled Clay's throat and he had a spell of coughing that softened me somewhat. He lay back languidly in his chair.

"It is to be hoped," said I as the purple dye of the dress gave out an odor like bay leaves cooking, "that this won't reach Mrs. Dolliver and remind her of her husband's cotton burning in Sweet Bay."

Clay turned his head on the back of his chair

without changing his position and fixed his eyes on mine. His hand against my table was within an inch of the locked tin box in which lay the perplexing note that he, as Mrs. Victor's agent, had signed. Why had he signed it? We had not exchanged a word about it. Familiarity with other people's possessions was not dishonor with him. I was rightly sure that he would never seek to find what did not lay open to his hand, as I had unfortunately left my trunk. But we looked each other steadily through and through for a few moments, thought answering to thought.

"O'Barr is an overgrown puppy," said Clay

"Is that any reason why you should do business with him?" said I.

"He got my dander up."

"And he dared you to show the names that would go with yours in Sweet Bay."

"And I dared him to try if they would trust his power of attorney for John Dolliver."

"I sincerely hope none of John Dolliver's money has gone into a pocket with such a hole as Mrs. Victor's has," said I sternly.

"Only in promises as yet," said he coolly, still lying back in his chair, his head turned toward me, his eyes holding mine. "Did I realize any money on that note? John Dolliver had cotton burned by the enemy."

"Was it *all* burned? He raised himself and leaned toward me, a broad smile spreading over his face as he watched the expression of mine. "Cheated out of a sermon, eh?" said he.

I was cheated. O'Barr had paid him and his in cotton. Dolliver was as safe after as before the transaction. For, what was the cotton worth to him? Who was buying Southern cotton, and to whom could it be forwarded when deliveries were blockaded? All the value O'Barr had put upon it was a lie, doubtless, which his partner was on the spot now to discover. Clay Monroe and his associates were wise enough to know what they had bound themselves to repay. The note was safe in my possession, and my old friend had not made a fool of himself trying to negotiate it.

With a sigh of relief at that latter thought, I put my hand out toward the tin box, and Clay

seized it with a boisterous shout of laughter, as if he were a naughty boy who had been watching for the lift of paternal wrath. I had no premonitions of the temptation lying in those sincerely burly, honestly-ginned bales of cotton. Clay had never lied to me, nor did he ever afterward, unless inconstancy is an unspoken lie. What plea had I but idle curiosity to question his further intentions in this matter?

I let my hand lie passively in his grasp, and took it away only to pick up a piece of paper which had fallen blazing on the carpet—a fragment of a letter from the pocket of the burning dress. It was a corner of a gray-blue sheet, gilt-edged in the style ladies affected in those days. It held a few words in small but emphatic writing, the lines rather crooked—apparently a shopping memorandum. I had seen Mrs. Victor's writing. This was not hers.

I blew out the scrap and twisted it a moment or two in my fingers under Clay's heedless eyes. I slipped it into my breast pocket. I did not confess to myself why. I had so carried Patty's

three-cornered, scalloped pink note. Its successor was there the next day, when I came across Tostie busy with a pencil, but she was only making figures. To relieve hours of *ennui* we folks at the hotel had clubbed together and instituted a circulating library, with our pretty girls as alternate librarians.

Tostie was alone in the room appropriated to it, numbering a box of new books. She pulled out a copy of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and, with a mischievous smile at the thought of his reception of it, asked me to reserve it for Clay Monroe by writing his name on it. I was obeying her when Mrs. Victor dropped in, read the name over my shoulder, gave a few knowing hems and smiles to encourage me in carrying out her previously expressed wishes, and contentedly dropped out. Tostie stooped again and drew out of the box a pamphlet with the picture of a noted clerical abolitionist on the cover.

"What shall we do with this old horror?" said she.

I started in shocked amazement that for the trifle of homeliness she should forget her respect

for the abolitionist's cause. A little color flew over her face.

"It is very hard to remember that you have any opinions about anything," said she.

Then thinking she had made matters worse by her apology for herself, she assumed a most conciliating confidence, drew her chair nearer mine, and lowered her voice almost to a whisper.

"Read me some verses while I mark the books," said she. "I should love to hear you."

It does not matter what the verses were. I remembered them only too well. I picked up the first book of poetry that came to hand. I did not throw it away because every line was sentimental. I felt a charming, comfortable elation as I held my listener's close attention, even to the neglect of her task.

I paused, and found she had not realized a word of what I had read. She had been absorbed in the inflections of my voice. I, poor egotist! was more charmed than ever. She told me she could tell my voice in the biggest crowd, and she often knew whom I was addressing long before she saw me or heard what

I said. This was the way I spoke to Mrs. Dolliver, and that was the way to Mrs. Dolliver's children; this to Clay, and that to Lord Robin. So she went on delightfully.

"And how do I summon my captain-general?" said I.

"You remember I called myself that!" she exclaimed, moving away and provokingly turning her back full upon me, so that I could not see her face.

I was begged, and I engaged to help her on her next library duty. I had so deliciously flavored an uncongenial employment! The time of duty came, and I with it, but my bird had flown. A gouty bachelor had besought some one to exercise his horses; Clay had presented himself for the opportunity, and Tostie had succumbed to the invitation of those champ-ing, pawing steeds.

The two children of reckless impulses dashed off at a dangerous gait and returned at an altogether unsanctionable hour to the gossip of the hotel, Mrs. Victor's immovable, smiling commendation, and the displeasure of the owner of

the foaming team. I never saw Colonel Monroe more tenderly affectionate with his wild boy than he was that night, nor more oblivious of Tostie. The significance of it all escaped me.

I made myself and my injured dignity scarce, and the next morning gladly accompanied Lord Robin on a furlough to Fort William. I had an idea he was drawn there by a little homesick *greeting* in the depths of his quiet soul for that other Fort William under the shadow of Ben Nevis. Sober-minded fellows, such as he and I, do not submit gracefully to Cupid's chaffing, even with a possibility of victory ahead.

"I thought your Guards were the most heavily armed in the Queen's service," said I, as we started on our trip in lugubrious silence. My companion turned slowly toward me, a twinkle in his blue eye.

"And I thought you had quit war forever," he retorted. He smote his big Highland knee suddenly with his fist. "We are running away!" he cried.

We burst into a roar of laughter and enjoyed every minute of the furlough, staying to the

last wag of it. It is surely good sometimes for man to be alone, if only to collect his senses. Away from rooms full of stuffs and heat, the brain clears and hope rises. We came back cheerily from a rather rough tour, and I was mightily touched to hear from Clay that Miss Tostie Carroll had been right poorly of late, was, in fact, at the hour of our arrival detained from dinner by a headache.

Later on, when Patty's children had dragged me into their mother's parlor unannounced, I was surprised to find the "maiden all forlorn" making her vigorous way through a case of French shoes an enterprising merchant had sent to the hotel for inspection. High-buttoned ladies' boots were, I believe, just coming into fashion and creating great excitement. The floor was strewn, like a miniature battlefield, with numerous specimens, all tasseled and of a Hessian aspect.

Tostie was tripping round in a pair of the most pronounced high-steppers, rosy as could be desired and as frivolous as I could have wished her not to be. She gave me no chance

to humble myself for my curt grace before my departure when I had avoided an imagined explanation from her of her discourtesy. She was as merry—at a distance—with me as she apparently was with Clay, ignored all allusion to my absence, and danced out of the room, skirt lifted and boot-tassels flying, a moment or two after I walked in.

When I went to my newspaper work the next morning, I found a veritable tempest stewing among the office ink-pots. My substitute, greedy of a good sum of money, had hired out a portion of a page and, contrary to the policy of the paper, admitted an article of local description full of personalities easily applied to the guests of the hotel.

Our editor-in-chief had awakened to the mistake on the issue of the paper that morning. The communication had been anonymous—without address—the bonus trustingly unprotected in case of rejection. I examined the sheet on which the original skit had been written—gray-blue, gilt-edged, covered with small but emphatic letters. I compared it with the

bit of singed paper tucked away in an inside pocket of my portemonnaie. The corners matched, corners of sheets eight by ten inches, a foreign size to me, and one which only an unconventional woman would choose.

The effusion was about as crude a performance as could be imagined, and as girlish. I was startled and really alarmed at its bald allusion to the likeness between himself and his dog, which sullen temper could paint on a certain young brilliant's face. The paragraphs in my department were all covered by my name. I deliberately counted the cost of stopping further investigation. I set out to bear blame as the author of the affair.

I hope I may ever be ready to shield the weaker sex, unpopular as I have been therewith. I also hope that I may never again be tempted for any member of it, to undergo the trial I did that morning when I returned to the hotel. Not only did I feel as if I were compounding a felony in keeping silence to extract a sweet, secret confession for the return of my good name; but I might have been a common

eavesdropper, so stealthily did I have to gather opinions.

Several copies of the paper circulated at the hotel for my sake, and were usually discussed at our common table, with a little flattering fuss. Silence was the order of this occasion accompanied by interrogative glances. Tostie was not present. To my amazement, Clay read the obnoxious column quietly through with but a slight increase of color, folded his copy of the paper and slipped it in a pocket of his father's coat. He had been waiting on the latter with the most tender solicitude, even passing on the daintiest morsels from his own dishes.

As they rose from the table Clay drew the old man's arm affectionately through his, and so—beautiful of face, noble in height and carriage—they went out of the room. Different as their natures seemed, they had their moral bond. It was sadly pathetic to see the son rely on his father's unwise leniency, as the father rested on his strong young arm, the one continually supporting the other. As I watched them pass out, clinging to each other, I could not but

think Clay's silence ominous. When I further saw him striding after Tostie as she was slyly leaving the hotel for an airing, I felt I must have advice. It was worse than useless to apply to Mrs. Victor's wandering mind, and I was so thinking when I came upon Mrs. Dolliver seated alone studying the subject that absorbed me. She looked up at me with a decided countenance. I was about to give her the root of the matter when she anticipated me.

"I hope," said she, with her usual intuition, "you will make haste to clear yourself and publish the name of our backbiter."

"Am I not better able," said I, "to live down the talk and answer the Monroes than she?"

"She?" exclaimed Mrs. Dolliver, rising in astonishment to her full but limited stature.

I had received kindness and care from the family of John Dolliver which I could not forget; but the look, the laugh, that shot out at me from his wife's brown eyes, pierced me to the marrow. While memory lasts, that, too, must be remembered.

"Have I been dreaming ever since I knew

you?" said Patty Dolliver. "Can it really be *you* in your sober senses who accuse an innocent girl of such an ugly trick on her lover?" How I winced at those two latter words, and how curious it all seems to me now! "Why! Tostie's the most guileless, affectionate child in the world. She would not hurt a fly. Unwomanly and shocking as you are trying to make her out, I for one intend to go on admiring her. Just you wait, Giant Slay-good, till my butterfly chooses her mate, and you'll see her build a nest of affection that will make you a worm of envy. It is well that you are not that now." She looked up at me, her eyes sparkling with, I was not sure what, and very intent on me withal.

"Who wrote the article?" I asked bluntly.

"Colonel Monroe," said she, "whom you tried to make me like. He wanted to turn the poor heathen against his son since he has failed to turn his son against the poor heathen. If it was any one else, Clay would have lashed your paper pretty well by this hour and your own head might also need resetting." She spread out

her full skirt as far as her small fingers would stretch and, with her head haughty, walked off in the might of her superior guessing powers.

I was quite willing to burn the colonel's gilt-edged letter and the scrap of his accounts with Mrs. Victor, which I had been carrying in my inner pocket. Clay and his father being as silent as Tostie, I was glad to rely upon Patty to spread her version of the occurrence, which proved to be the true one—but to come across her time and again revelling in laughter at my expense was hard to endure. I also came across Clay kissing his hand to her at her window. He asserted, with an explosion of mirth, that he had mistaken her for Daisy. Age, height and coloring being against the probability of the mistake, my irritation sought the occasion to reprove Patty for overfriendliness with such a scapegrace. What I said I never could find again, so wondrously were my words dished up to me.

It was John Dolliver I had insulted, my trusting friend, the blessedest and only good man that ever lived. Did I suppose such as he,

the very salt of the earth, could make a mistake in the choice of a wife, and would not his heart break in twain at the thought of her slandered in her lonely devotion to him and his little darlings? Tremendous exhibitions of hugging and kissing went on with the latter. The combat was rare. It seemed as though an ocean of tears were to roll between us forever till John Dolliver himself unconsciously patched up our peace by writing me that he could reach England more easily than Canada, and begging me to have his family there to meet him.

Even in the joy of receiving such news, Patty kept me at a distance, and she was more than half under the wing of the Trents when we started in their company. I kept my fist on her money account, however—thanks be to the overruler of subsequent calamity—and she was too much of a child to deprive me of that important share in her guardianship.

It occurs to me that, for my self-abnegation in agreeing instantler to that departure from Montreal, I have not yet received a word of gratitude.

CHAPTER VI.

"HOW FAR FROM HERE TO HEAVEN?"

It happened that Mrs. Victor was the first outsider to whom I communicated my departure. She astounded me by instantly making use of it for her own pleasure. I never was more mortified than by the situation she invented, she a youthful charmer and I a rosy-gilled cavalier. Her conduct pressed upon me a suspicion I had begun to entertain that everybody considered me an object of self-righteous vanity even fools could tickle.

"Yes, indeed," said she finally, "Canada without yourself and Mrs. Dolliver, dear major, is one great thaw for me. You know how thoroughly Protestant, even Puritanical I am in my inclinations. I cannot look out of the window here without my moral and æsthetic



taste being offended. To be buried with you in a twilight English town like Leamington is all I could ask. There is nothing in the world to prevent."

So it proved. She was weary of the procrastination of Clay's promises and eager for a change. It must have been about a week before the breaking up that Clay was spurred to procure for her a large sum of money, God knows where. He had not been idle in the interests of the Confederate government, trying to sell cotton and one thing and another, but he had found Canada's warm expressions of sympathy mere steam when it came to action. I knew he had not commanded sufficient money to prostitute any undetected.

I had forgiven him much. The usual consequence of a pitying affection was not wanting in my case. Moreover Tostie was accompanying her aunt to England, and whereas her rebuffs of Clay had previously been blank cartridges, there had lately appeared a decided inclination on his part toward Mina Trent. As I fancied him thus amicably retreating to the

rear of the position, I was so warmed with graciousness I fairly had to bubble over.

I met him walking with his dog one of those last Montreal days, as I walked out with Patty to help her buy a trunk. I have often noticed that an engaging expression covers a multitude of delinquencies, not only in character as in Clay's case but, with other folks, in features and toilet. The colonel's curious literary effort had given the son a control of his face he never lost. He was looking very handsome and pensive as we met, also lonely—left out, it seemed to me.

"Clay," said I impulsively, taking his hand in mine. "Lord Robin tells me light is at last shining on his path. He will not sell his commission after all. The fare he had engaged with us lies at my disposal. Will you trust me with your father till the war is over and go South in peace of mind?"

"Trust you!" exclaimed Clay as he sandwiched my hand between both of his, genuine emotion blushing and sparkling in his face. "I would trust you with 'kingdom come.'"

Honor bright, Mrs. Dolliver, I am beginning to rate my goodness by the way I trust him. You know it makes an angel of a difference to a tacky soul like mine to have a guardian who is always believing in one's possibilities."

He lifted his hands to my shoulders and smiled serenely in my face.

"I am not all past and no future to you, am I?" said he. "As to returning South, I don't know but I ought to make an effort to raise the cotton famine in England. I can tussle as well for my people with coin as with blood and fire. What do you both say to taking father on ahead and letting me meet you there when I get orders from below?"

What could I do but assent to such candor and charming trustfulness, even though Patty was looking on, my recent reproof still rankling in her gentle bosom? She turned to me as Clay walked away with his dog, for which, with his usual contradiction of expectation, he had begun to entertain affection the day of his father's rebuke.

"I am glad that you do not try to lord it over



Clay's conscience," said she with an emphasis on Clay's name as if there might be other people with whom I interfered. "I don't know anything that drives people to the bad like that."

So Clay Monroe bade us ocean travelers a short farewell as we shifted the scene of our little comedy to the steamer Persia. The last hand he held belonged to Nina Trent—soft-and-easy, white-necked dumpling, the least of likely subjects for a heart scalding; but she keeps her fingers bare for a war-poor planter too proud to woo her, and she owes not one of her white hairs to Clay. He gave her a bunch of roses which she wore, and his father developed a sudden devotion for Tostie which said, I thought, all sorts of things about the withdrawal of his son's suit. The girl was touched and flattered. She made herself a willing dependence, and it was all very courtly and picturesque.

The evening of the day we set sail from New York, I happened to sit alone with her on deck. It was spring-time, a warm moisture from the water embalming the ship like country air. It

made the lights beautifully opalescent, the air full of soft echoes. So happy, so secure was I, I began my search for feelings kindred to my own by talking of Clay Monroe. It was the keynote, the false step of all our after campaign.

"I am so delighted," said she. "When he joins us on the other side he is going to see about something that has been weighing on me terribly—a will that was registered abroad and an estate that has never been properly administered."

She paused and smiled mischievously at me as a couple of Spaniards passed us, members of a party which had driven Mrs. Victor to change her place at table, by their eating of potatoes and rice cooked in oil.

"It is very comforting to draw near to you," Mrs. Victor had remarked very audibly indeed as she squeezed a chair in beside me to finish her meal.

"I have reason to be considerably interested in things Spanish," said Tostie on the deck, her eyes wandering to the ring upon my little



finger which I handed to her to gratify her curiosity.

"P-C-C-L," she read from the wreath around the singing bird. "I am sure those letters stand for a foreign motto I have heard somewhere. It is strange that you should have a ring you do not understand."

"Wear it awhile and perhaps frequent looking at the letters will recall the motto to you," said I.

I watched her excitedly as she calmly put the ring on her engagement finger. Her terms of capitulation after our quarrel had been honorable enough but very impartial about including me in any blame involved.

"Being prepared for each other's faults ought to make us very good company, don't you think so?" said she now.

The rarest company in the world, I thought, complacently.

"And don't you think I am really on the whole more my better self with you and Mrs. Dolliver than with any one else?"

Sweet confession! In all modesty, I agreed

to it, privately eliminating Mrs. Dolliver from the question.

"I am sure I ought to be sugar and spice and everything nice with you," continued my good company, "when you were ready to bear a hard reputation for me in that newspaper scandal. You must not forget though, major, your suspicions were anything but complimentary to me. I really cannot feel under obligation to you."

I would not have had her feel so for the world. I wanted what I craved gratis or not at all.

"As to the poor old colonel's forgetting your concern in the matter—" she paused and pressed her pretty lips expressively. "It is sad to see an old man without any women folk to steer him."

Her eyes were on a couple near us to whom my gaze had also been straying; an old, afflicted man stretched out upon his sea chair and a stately wife, his junior, assiduously waiting on him. I had heard of them, he a self-made Croesus and she a social queen blooming out from a factory. I had been spying on them



with sentimental thoughts, painting myself an example of marital devotion sound and rugged from its building against wind and weather.

Alas! after his death she vested her opportunities in the company of a ribald peer of high degree. He found a fairer, younger woman than she to take his smutted name and gild his scandalous debts, but she wedded a harmless weakling from that same nobility to her harmless daughter. From that sphere of music-hushed and scented fever, where the finer morals and the finer courtesies of life are forgot, she went out with naked death, wrangling over tradesmen and servants to her last breath—a miserable travesty of the honest Yankee heroine she started out to be.

She sailed with me and the girl beside me away from the war where perhaps it had been better we had all remained. I never saw her again, but, in the drama of exile, later on I came across a figure busily and unconsciously preparing to far outdo her, through his second generation, in those pseudo-argent circles where she stooped to conquer. I met him in that slum-

bering Warwickshire town which John Dolliver had appointed as a rendezvous.

Behold our ocean party lodged in Leamington, the Dolliver and Victor contingent in brick cubby-holes on Portland Place which looked up Dale Street where the Trents' windows let out friendly echoes of song and laughter, and up Portland Street where the colonel and I were quartered on an old soldier.

The latter presented us with a dingy rosary picked up on a Crimean battlefield. The colonel settled the polite dispute between us concerning its possession by handing it to Tostie one morning when I took him to her aunt for a private legal séance. He made one or two windings of it round the finger that wore my ring.

"Everlasting hope for dead hope," said he, and I, fond simpleton, believed he talked of his son, and I had his sympathy.

I consigned him to Mrs. Victor and took my hope to Warwick, she warning me as we started out by saying: "I am sorry I have to beg you to look and admire my new regimentals, major.

This linsey-woolsey, these stout boots, are all to make you find me congenial, and it's miles of of long walks you've got to take me for tempting me to look so ugly."

She rested by the way in the lush grass of Mr. Wise's meadows, the solemn sun shining on her as she irreverently trailed her beads in the canal and wound the black chain round a ball of cowslips, herself a heedless flower too soon to be bound and bruised.

A heavy horse came drowsily down the canal path, its mistress, whip in hand, guiding its rope, her lilac print dress and her white sun-bonnet cool against her flushed face. Her brutish husband leaned over the edge of the boat slinking through the water, and he and she startled us with a knowing grin.

We passed on by the pleasant home of a literary American, and a little beyond came within sight of Warwick, one of the most superb views in the kingdom. Fired with enthusiasm by the lovely scene of wood and river, bridge and castle, held in by the tapering spire of St. Nicholas and St. Mary's tower, my companion

felt that seven-league boots could not show her the land fast enough. She must needs join Mr. Edgerton's riding academy and learn to cross country on horseback.

I was bursting with chivalry, and Patty, poor woman, was very busy just then doing up her sewing to be free to entertain her lord. I could not endure to meet Tostie on a high, big-boned hack called the Admiral, led around Leamington in a troop of pupils by a stiff little bow-legged jockey. I myself became her riding-master with bribes for first choice of the town livery.

"We go very well together," said she, the beginner, to me, the veteran; but I found her condescension satisfactory.

So was the bell of the high-hatted town-crier, which gave me just excuse enough to protect her from the antics of the nervous steed she insisted upon riding. So was the drum of the circus pitched beside Shakespeare's Avon in the rich, open pastures of the Vale of the Red Horse. So was the bird which flew from the thatch of Ann Hathaway's cottage in romantic



Shottery and set us talking inquiringly of the love of the immortal wool-comber. So was the balloon which shot up near Kenilworth's barbi-can gatehouse, where we lingered to pity Amy Robsart. So were the pack of hounds which darted out from Stoneleigh's delicious woods.

So was not the mill-wheel at Guy's Cliff, at least not at first. In some unaccountable way Tostie's saddle slipped as we passed under the willows by the falling water, and her horse's feet began to go like a tedder in hay. Lightning alone could tell the time it took me to spring to the ground at the animal's side.

"Please don't look so pale," whispered Tostie before the mill hands as I lifted her down. "I was not the least frightened when you were here." The great hawthorn trees in the meadows bloomed with a suffocating sweetness just then.

There were flowers, flowers everywhere in those first months in Leamington, and not a thorn disclosed. Other strangers—and there were a score or two of stranded cotton brokers and so forth hobnobbing with us—might pre-

fer the archery and promenades of Jephson Gardens or Tennis, Hunt, and Cricket clubs. I chose a boat for two on the pensive Leam or restricted society in the arbor in the center of Perkins' Floral Gardens, embosomed in a blushing, perfumed mass of English roses.

I wonder if any one remembers the Blakedown woods as I do, with a young girl running hither and thither among its mossy trees and growing wild over its primroses, gloriously happy in the spring of the year and the spring of her youth? I wonder if any one ever knew the walk across the fields to the Dripping Well as I did with a slim hand laid confidingly in mine at the entrance stile, or busy for me serving cream cheese in a woven grass case and rolled bread at the farmer's cottage, or searching for pansies among the wheat, or picking bluebells on the steep slope to the spring where water drunk with a brown-haired nymph was the wine of the gods?

It is but a leap in thought, if farther in fact, to the black and white cottages of Whitnash, where we met a company of Oxford students coming out of St. Margaret's church. They



were footing it to Leamington for a benefit concert, singing as they left the ancient doorway. The song was the old familiar "Adeste Fideles," sung to the old familiar air. It was my first acquaintance with its virtue as a marching song. There were a soprano and alto among the singers. I would go a long journey to hear those two men again.

I could not but think the song was fuller and richer for a pair of gray eyes looking on with a smile of delight. Very lovely were the echoes dying in the sweetbrier hedges. I was irresistibly impelled to take them up, and, to her own rapturous surprise, my companion followed me with a fair counter tenor.

"I never could sing anything, anywhere, with anybody before," said she with an exaggeration I found very pardonable.

Indeed I could have joyfully continued the duet the whole mile home. If I had known how soon this happy musical discovery was to be made useless to me, I might have pleaded my patent then and there; whether for weal or woe, who can say?

The vocal ability was not more charming, however, than the surprising aptitude for mental labor I prided myself upon eliciting from the same quarter. Lord Robin, in the benevolence of his joy over the successful ending of his courtship, had overwhelmed me with letters of introduction to friends in the British Isles. The first one I presented was to Mr. Boulanger of Leamington, a government inspector of certain abuses in the pottery and mining districts in which I had for some time been interested. The reformations he was deputed to institute have long since been successfully carried out. I was delighted to devote time daily to his assistance in the investigation and making of reports.

I trust the sincerity of my humble part in a certain bluebook stands for me in the Great Book of all; but I confess to sweetening the task for myself. A pitying heaven and the kindest heart in the world alone know how I aped the family man in those few, fleeting days, dividing their hours conscientiously between duty and pleasure, but sharing everything with Tostie, regardless of comment. Victories with

Clay had all been barren of results. With her how different! With a thrill of mastery I felt her strong emotions and bright suggestions respond to my guidance as we talked of immortal souls in Christian England who had never heard the name of Christ, of women whom it was difficult to distinguish from brutalized men, of little children who had never seen the sun.

It was very good of Mr. Boulanger to recognize her girlish interest in the matter. I realize now the good nature I must have often strained. I claimed my own reward for the services he was pleased to value, by continually breaking in with her upon his solemn evenings of digestion and meditation; but his terrace garden, stepping down to dip the border of its gorgeous array in the silver river, held the loveliest lingering twilight in Leamington. Its intoxicating odors and whispering sounds might have sent a less willing mind than mine into deceiving dreams.

I never returned from it to my lodging that I did not feel as if I had taken a trip to some other country. Leamington was a nucleus of

delightful trips, and our American colony was rapidly enlarging. Mrs. Victor began preparations for enjoying them in her own individual manner, and I found her one day in great distress.

"I thought I would study up that Mr. Dickens before touring among the English," said she, "and I find I am entirely losing my control of language. You know, major, what an exemplar of purity I have been. Now my head is so flooded with the conversations of the undertow of society, I am not sure I am saying what you ought to hear."

To relieve her distressed brain I turned its attention to the new diversion of croquet, borrowing a key to the park in Clarendon Square where the Lethentys, very charming connections of Lord Robin, had rented a house. The family consisted of an invalid mother, who had come to drink the waters of Leamington, and seven sons, who, with the exception of one in India and one in Australia, took turns in sacrificing themselves to the inanities of the Spa. They were very gallant—two of them military men

at Gosport and Sandhurst—and they exhibited unearthly patience with Mrs. Victor's maneuvers at croquet. No one who cannot look back at the effect of that game in its first novelty upon the female mind can appreciate their chivalry. But all, including Tostie, deserted her one evening, leaving me alone of the fatigue party.

The heavenly twilight and the opportunity of Mr. Boulanger's garden had passed away. I was holding a candle—a not uncommon occurrence—for Mrs. Victor to conquer a particular stroke.

“Wouldn't it be nice,” said she, “if some one would come along with that lantern from Stratford with which Friar Lawrence discovered Romeo and Juliet?”

“At the tomb?” said I, digging the grave of my evening hopes with a mallet.

I scouted out a neatly folded bulky piece of paper. I had reason to be timid of mistakes with such waifs, but I idly opened out this one and recognized Tostie's Canada drawing of myself.

“Kept for herself!” my heart shouted

against my ribs. "All these weeks! All these months!"

On its reverse she had written a list of her excursions with me, each accompanied by an adjective beauteous to behold. I had but time to drop it by the garden seat where she had been sitting when she was back for it. She snatched it up with a sigh of relief.

"What have you found?" said I cruelly, with a joyous break in my voice.

"Forget-me-nots," said she, filling her hands with pink and blue from the tiny watering-ditch along the turf and flinging them over me.

Forget-me-nots? Have I got them all, and she none?

A burst of laughing music came on the quiet air from the band in the Pump Room grounds, the stars twinkled, and the trees waved encouragingly. We went in to drink tea with the Lethentys, to smell the sandalwood of Candahar, and bury our feet in the skins of Jamie's raids among the beasts of India.

When we came out the sky was dark and dropping, and Tostie wore a bracelet of mounted tiger claws upon her wrist.

CHAPTER VII.

HANGED ON A DILEMMA.

I FOUND occasion after croquet in Clarendon Square to call in Portland Place at Mrs. Victor's lodgings. They seemed to bid me welcome with their brass knocker and marble steps shining in the sun. It was a shock, as I drew nearer, to see the blackboard picture in none too large fragments thrown recklessly from a window to the public gaze and to find its author indifferent and silent when I appeared within the little brick house.

I was never an adept at reading women. Considerably wounded, I retreated to the reading room with the excuse of getting a first chance at the London papers that came in by the morning express. I was growing comfortable again in the quiet of the big room opening on a garden full of beehives, gillyflowers and

grapevines, when I chanced to read an allusion to the failure, through distress of war, of a Sweet Bay bank, the oldest in the port.

John Dolliver was mentioned as a stockholder. He had postponed his advent in Leamington till Patty's patience was tried almost beyond endurance. I was hurt that he had not confided the failure to me as the cause of his detention. I was irritated by a suggestion in his reticence that I might alarm Patty with the news. Surely I had not given him any cause to doubt my affectionate shielding of her from worry.

A trifle conscience-stricken, thinking with whom I had passed most of my English stay, I met Patty down the parade at the door of the Decayed Gentlewomen's Bazaar. She had gone there with a bundle of samples of her sewing-machine work on her children's clothes, for her kind heart had been disturbed at the time wasted there by delicate hands eager to earn the vulgar necessities of life without loss of refinement. She had won a complete victory with her dainty stitches over prejudices against the

unknown sewing-machine, but I found her in a more than testy humor.

"Not a letter from John for a week," said she. "What good has the opening of communication through the Mississippi done me, I should like to know?"

As no one had ever suggested any possibility of her deriving benefit from that event, the remark was unreasonable. So were her brown eyes looking out at me angrily from the ruche and flowers round her little face which her bonnet further sharpened by its peaked poke after it had gobbled all her hair in its crown down at her neck. It was very fatiguing to have her keep up the heydiddle-diddle all the way home, and I was not sorry when we reached her lodgings next door to Mrs. Victor in Portland Place. Friend after friend dropped in according to the custom of our American colony. When one or two were seen heading for a particular house, more were sure to follow and discuss the sorrows of war beside the teapot. The dissipations of tea in Leamington, morning, noon, and night, are wonderful to re-

call. We may be considered as having lived in a tea caddy. I wonder we were not returned home mummified.

Patty disappeared behind her tea urn in the long dining room where we assembled, the sun blinking through the glass doors opening on the garden. She only reappeared once when a young Oxonian burst in among us and gave her a hearty horse-kiss for his absent mother. He was one of those Ogbournes we had met in Canada. They were making use of wartime, as many others did, to have him Englished, and he was on a vacation walking tour, unalterably Yankee and hungry for Yankeedom.

"You need not laugh," said Patty, showing a face but half-smiling. "[That's the nicest present I have had for many a long day."

"Well, I declare!" exclaimed a tall, loose-jointed fellow who had just come in. We knew him as the Jolly Joker of a group of bachelors who had clubbed together in a house they called Snug Harbor, all of them stranded cotton-brokers, some of them decrying northern tyranny, and some southern rebellion.

"I scorned a report this morning that the rebs had put your husband in prison for paying his northern debts," continued the Jolly Joker, "but honestly, Mrs. Dolliver, I begin to think it may be true." With a slap on the boy Ogbourne's shoulder he sat down and laughed till he was silly.

Patty disappeared again behind her urn and all reason's horses and all reason's men could not bring her out again. I believe her distinct idea of her husband's situation was that he was tied to a tree and living on leaves and mule meat. Her food thenceforth became a torture to her. She could not endure salt on the table since she had heard of its scarcity in the South. As to a new pair of shoes for herself or her children, she would not hear of it. She was sure John was paying the prices she had read of, twenty-five dollars a pair and paper soles at that. She felt as if all the paper in the States had gone into bogus boots and he would never write to his *mie* again.

He did though and not from a rebel prison by any means, but the letter included a warning

to expect interrupted correspondence and did not tell her the route by which he was working his way to her. Then she was certain he was going to sail out past the forts of Sweet Bay's harbor and run a couple of thousand miles of blockaded seacoast. She had dreadful visions of torpedoes in the channel and every match we struck was a burning lighter floating on to fire John's vessel.

"We must prepare for the worst," she was forever saying.

Because she knew how unequal she would prove to such event, she felt obliged to mortify her hopes continually. Every bit of cheerful, second-hand report of her husband's well being—for direct word soon ceased—was a signal for me to accompany her on some dreary excursion. She became addicted to Edgehill, but not for the magnificent view of shires from its summit where, all the world grown new again with Tostie at my side, I had listened to the landlord of the Rising Sun public on the old battles of King Charles.

Patty went there systematically to depress



herself amid visions of human bones under the dark firs of the Grave Fields, and she had a horrid propensity for calculating the number of bullets in Bullet Hill, and examining those which had been taken out to query if they were used or unused. I began to fear for her mental balance and tried to bring her under the influence of the incumbent of Milverton Chapel who still lives among us Americans in grateful memory. Unfortunately, I was late in calling for her one Sunday morning, we had to sit in the gallery, and my good work was all undone.

"It would kill John to see me in such a position," she whispered to me with reproachful tears in her eyes.

Then to punish herself for her burst of pride she put herself under the wing of a saintly old Southern woman we called the Methodist bishop and attended the homely little Wesleyan Chapel in Portland Street. I used to watch her going past my window to all the meetings, and saw her come home one time from a love-feast with a piece of caraway cake too large for her to consume in the limits of the service. Hearing that

the children had enjoyed it, I found it was prepared by Mr. Plum, the baker, as "Dissenters' Bread," and ordered a whole loaf for the sacrilegious infants. Patty was shocked. She forthwith found displeasure in the courtesying of members of the congregation to the few of the upper class who worshiped there.

She adjourned to the more deathly gloom of the Lady Huntington Chapel in Mill Street. As we issued thence one day, I could not help laughing and telling her to compare herself to the hired mutes we met snuffling after a tradesman's hearse. I was rewarded by a wail against the brutality of the place to which I had brought her and which served no ice cream for her children. I remember distinctly, and I will not be contradicted about it, that drops of grief fell at this time over an unsatisfied longing for a glass of ice water.

"I begin to realize," she forced me to say, "how smooth life has been with me hitherto."

"I should think indeed," she ungratefully answered, "you would feel very tired of women and want to find your place among men."



I made a work-and-wage agreement with Mr. Boulanger that very afternoon. It took me away from Leamington occasionally, but Tostie was a more successful guardian of the peace than I. I acknowledge she was everything that was womanly and devoted in her care of our afflicted one, that Patty in her trouble developed Tostie's character in just the way I had tried and failed. It is true she took to flaunting colors again to cheer her patient, was generally ablaze with scarlet poppies, and my much thinking did not solve her disagreeable treatment of myself. She was very good and engaging with Patty's children when unobserved, but let me cast my long shadow on the scene and it seemed as though she were hurrying for a wager to show how totally devoid of graceful, caressing ways a young woman could be.

She might have the better looks, but I was sure I had the better sense. I mailed myself in the garment of pride and left her severely alone in her management of Patty. She showed considerable ingenuity in a girlish way.

"Mr. Dolliver will have so much to say to

you, dear Mrs. Dolliver, when he comes," was her advice: "you can never in this world tell him all that has happened to yourself. Why not write it out in chapters, a chapter a day?"

So Patty's pen worked hard those days and consoled her for a time. Then too, Tostie had the inspiration to take her to Bullock Brothers at intervals and to the much medaled Netterville Briggs to have a series of photographs taken for uxorious John, in the changing raiment of the seasons. Patty was complimented there on holding her head like Victoria, and at once assumed a bond of widowhood with her majesty. Some one brought her one of Jabez Hughes' photographs of the latter from the Isle of Wight, little Albert Victor sitting on his grandmama's knee and ogling her familiarly out of a burdensome white cap. Patty studied it a good deal, liked the queen's attire of *crepe* and silk, and imitated it as nearly as she could without accepting John's fate as irrevocably sealed.

She put aside all the children's gay sashes and dressed them in new, dull suits. She sent a commission to an artist in New York to paint

her pictures of John's childhood. I believe it went to Eliza Greatorex, then in her prime. When the holly-berries began to redden along the road to St. Winifred's Hospital, she had already taken that walk countless times with gifts for the sick. In various other ways, trying to be reconciled to the shadow of dark coming events, growing paler and thinner every day, she added to her expenses with a touching disregard of making ends meet. When I ventured to exert a little control, my reputation for economy instead of being in my favor was against me, and Tostie continued to inveigle her—without intention I am sure—into further unwarrantable expenditure.

Tostie was having her West Indian French polished, and induced Patty to join her in lessons from the French principal of a school which counted a number of Americans among its day scholars and boarders. Among the latter were the daughters of a famous American surgeon practising at that time in Paris. Patty sprang it on me like a thunderclap that she was going with the girls across the channel for their Christ-



mas holidays, and would leave her children with me. She was so fiercely positive in her decision and had such an evident terror of my opposition, that I could say nothing.

"You must allow me some experience and not dry up all my faculties," said this dear foe of mine, her lips and hands trembling with nervousness.

Patty, the model mother, running away from her children ! I grouped the poor little things about me at the railroad station on shoulders, arms, and at my side, to give her a last comforting sight of them.

"You always are a little bit of John to me when he's away," she rewarded me by saying, a faint smile flickering over her pinched, distracted face.

I wonder I did not seize hold of her and take her out of the window of the railway carriage in whose door the key that locked her away turned dismally. She held out her purse for me to treat the children, but they were already heavily bribed not to weep. I had also induced Nurse Pearl to add a cheerful color to their

clothes. In those days the crime of millinery birds had not yet been canvassed and two at least of the hats bobbing against me had red robins, the domino of those hopping on the snowy ground.

"You look like an ornamental hat stand," said Tostie as the train started and she gave vent to the laughter which had been consuming her at the sight of me.

I forgave her, for I thought, with a throb of relief, we were going to be once more comrades unarmed. As we took the children for a stroll and passed the Lethenty's house where we had become very familiar, Mrs. Lethenty's pale, refined face appeared at a window, surmounted by a marvelous cap with Coventry heavily represented in its ribbons. She would hear of nothing but the children coming in to her for their supper. We all found their chatter interesting and obstreperous Daisy's quiet amusement of herself, posing before a mirror, very satisfactory till a visitor was announced, the sister-in-law of a London cardinal of note. To Tostie's indignation, the children were at once

swept away to the housekeeper's room. Not being introduced, and our identity in the visitor's mind being vague, she entered into a conversation with Mrs. Lethenty of the most edifying intimacy.

"My dear sister is now having her poor leg shampooed at Buxton," said she. "The woman operates half an hour each day and she also goes into the warm bath. I fancy I can see a little improvement in her poor foot but not in her poor leg."

Tostie rose abruptly and fled to the housekeeper's room, whence she returned in a high apron, looking very rosy and pretty but undeniably pert.

"Don't you think marmalade will be better than jam for the children?" said she to Mrs. Lethenty, ignoring the visitor whose embroidered satin was spread over a whole sofa and fairly shook its flowers in its owner's astonishment. "Ward has already given them all cake before bread because she says when they are in Scotland they must do as Scotland does."

The cardinal's sister-in-law promptly avenged

her dignity. "I was in the dentist's on Euston Place, the other day," said she to me in a stentorian voice as Tostie disappeared again, "when a young woman came in with a child to have its tooth drawn. I think myself the operator is something of a savage, but that could not justify this girl's display of temper. It was as shocking as her cropped hair. She let herself down to his class, you know, and the child was very disagreeable, wanting the tooth put in again." It was not difficult to recognize Tostie and Daisy. "But of course we don't have anything to do with these Americans."

Mrs. Lethenty looked at me beseechingly and I boiled under a lid.

"You know, my dear, I could not help being just a little affronted at your appearing in a tow apron," said Mrs. Lethenty afterward to Tostie.

Tostie started out bravely to make amends. Two English girls had dropped in and fell into ecstasies over the Mabel Waltz which was as steady an entertainment for callers at that time as a picture album.

"If you only could hear the Guards at Bath

play it," said they. "Will you be so very kind, Miss Carroll, as to join us in a five-handed arrangement?" They had the music with them.

Tostie sacrificed herself at the piano till the Lethenty son, then on home duty, came to the rescue. A delicate, sensitive fellow, his nickname, Lambie, seemed singularly appropriate till he revealed his gift of story-telling. He had been in India for a time with his soldier brother, but in the Civil Service. He spread an Indian picture cloth—gentle in its blue, rose, and silver as his own appearance, startling in its foreign birds and beasties as his own imagination—and proceeded to tell curdling tales, quite too true for little ears to hear. He told about the beast-children of India, very graphically about one, hairy and quadrupedal, he had seen confined in a cage because it shrank from human beings and insisted upon running away from its rescuers to the wolf-mother which had stolen it when an infant.

I could see Daisy, half-understanding, shudder at the exclamations about her, and when she snuggled beside me and buried her face in my

coat, I determined it was home time. Tostie had had but half a chance to show herself penitent and amiable to Mrs. Lethenty, of whom she was very fond. She objected to leaving, but she had promised Patty to accompany the children home and stay with them. I suppose she thought I was putting the wishes of a child before hers; but Daisy's small fist—a very hand of fate—was fast in mine, and I felt I held a great responsibility from both her father and mother. I had Buddle called with a couple of his Bath chairs and tucked in the troublesome infant with her comfortable little brothers and sisters, after assuring her that Buddle's lantern, not to speak of his squashy goloshes, would keep away all the tigers of Warwickshire. Tostie haughtily refused to ride, giving Pearl her place, and as Mrs. Lethenty saw us off, her motherly heart perceived the difference between us.

“Good-by, my son,” said she to me, and, as she was very used to young men about her, she honored me with a kiss, “If I had a daughter you should have her.”



My heart went up as Tostie's cheeks foolishly flushed. Too joyously I sought her eyes, and she started on at a good space from my side. I think, looking back with a strange contraction at my heart, maybe it was the old story of maiden pride and male stupidity.

"How cold it is!" said I after a silent tramp during which Buddle and his man had nobly distanced us. No answer.

"This the first skating winter Leamington has had for many a year, they say," I continued. No answer.

"I was astonished," I continued patiently, "when I heard you were going to leave Canada's slides and rinks. Whatever induced you?"

Our shadows streaked closer together, and I heard my companion breathing shortly.

"Several reasons," said she. "One of them was Aunt Medora's saying I would be ungrateful after your kindness about the newspaper, not to come here when you urged her to bring me."

She was leaning toward me and gave one sharp glance in my face.

"Of course I knew you urged nothing of the kind," said she, retreating with an angry flush.

She put me in a piteous plight. I had to give Aunt Medora over to untruth or wound Tostie's transparent vanity.

"Not in words—" I began, hanging myself on the dilemma.

"What was that French quotation you translated for Mrs. Lethenty?" Tostie interrupted.

"A woman must have only one love," I quoted softly.

The words, as I spoke them on the still evening air, sounded beautiful to me, in fact I may say sacramental.

Tostie had treated me hitherto to scathing fires. She gave me now a volley, regular and keen.

"When I first met Clay Monroe, Major Duane," said she, "he had no notion of me whatever. I was tired of coffee and oranges, and I tempted him. Then I tired of him too." From which bold, uncovered sally, I gathered she wished no truce with my fastidiousness.

"How can you repair the wrong to him?" said I, touched in more points than one.

There was a short pause. Then she answered me. "He will be here soon," she said. "I feel it in the air." She had grown suddenly quiet and her voice was low.

As we came up to the chairs at their destination, Patty's children were piping for their beds and Branch had arrived on the scene full of dark jealousy at Buddle's manner with Pearl.

"Good-night and sweet repose, my lovely," Buddle was saying, "and no offence to the King of Africa."

Branch muttered that Master Clay was on his way to fix him, and the chair lamps went out with a fizz.

With a chill of certainty I felt that my pleasant pastoral was ended.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE BREACH OF PROMISE.

OUR American circle had not recovered its surprise at "poor little Mrs. Dolliver's" departure without a male escort when Mrs. Victor was bitten by a desire for an excursion alone with her maid. From morning till night she sang a song of two dozen silver buttons with anchors for a boating jacket, and insisted her need of them could not be supplied anywhere but at Birmingham. No one, as she was aware, was going there at this time, and purchases from any other place were scorned by her. She refused to pay for them and put all her acquaintance in debt.

"I would as lief you put cats in my hair," said she to me, "as ask me to have confidence in buttons from Worcester where the cathedral

is obscured by china works and the trivialities of time."

"I did not see a new building going up in the whole of Rome. Why not go to the Tiber for buttons?" asked the Jolly Joker of Snug Harbor; but Mrs. Victor stuck to the silver plate of Birmingham.

Of course Tostie and I were bound to the children in Patty's absence, but this foolish knave laid her plans through a "Brummagem" retired cutler and his wife whom she had hitherto professed to despise. She worshiped daily before a silver cup which they had received from the late king in memoriam of his falling off an unruly horse at their door and being housed with them for a time, and in a really surprising manner she extracted information about the journey she was to undertake. It is to be hoped that her condescension did not contaminate their principles which were much more aristocratic than her own, though they did have Florida coral and pink shells imported for their mantels, and Mrs Brummagem wore a satin apron as her full-dress regalia.

I had had my own suspicions of Mrs. Victor having a double object in going alone to Birmingham, for she was continually blurting out about Birmingham buttons being well proved on Confederate uniforms, as if she were forced to give some intimation of a secret she was holding. She was also in vigorous correspondence with Clay Monroe. The colonel confirmed me in my conjecture that she was in league with the latter in some project. He treated her to a constant listening scrutiny, silently pinching his long, finely-cut nose as was his habit when puzzled, or smoothing upward the six inch satin stock around his neck, of which I am frequently reminded by the bodice belts women have lately been wearing. As to acquiring information without Clay's permission, he would not think of it, always treating Clay as a child with an affliction not to be aroused under any circumstances.

"Of course," said Mrs. Victor, as she bade us good-by, all titivated off in blue Irish poplin said to be from a piece of goods cut for the Prince of Wales' bride, "I will not forget that

Birmingham is the toyshop of Europe. It will be such a comfort, dear major, to think of you as one of the Little Brothers of Saint Christopher with your even, military step patrolling round Tostie and the children."

Tostie was the children's guardian angel at night but in the daytime she withdrew at my approach and devoted herself to the colonel. Pearl confided to me that Miss Carroll was so *perpendicular* there was no pleasing her, indeed the Queen of Sheba would have been more easily suited. A wound to Patty's pride always resulted in tears, which however were an enemy in sight; but with Tostie a fever of independence set in at once and burned all our connections. I am sure I had every reason to wish her grievance soothed, but I seemed to add fuel to the fire whether I tried to act nonchalantly as if nothing had come between us or to abase myself before her. I had too faint a heart to introduce the subject of our quarrel. Perhaps it was for that she was watching.

One evening we and our friends were invited to a Christmas tree at Moultrie Villa, the home

of an Englishman with an American wife, the abode of as easy and abundant hospitality as I have ever met, and the most wholesome family atmosphere I had the privilege to enjoy in Leamington. There every one had a place, and old and young were often gracefully united. Patty's children, being looked upon by our English friends as temporarily orphaned, were adopted wherever they went, and on this holly berry occasion were little kings and queens, we elders laying ourselves out for them and their compeers as laughing or any other kind of stocks they wished.

Forfeits were the order of the hour, proclaimed on the slightest pretext. We all went in to "twirl the trencher," and obligingly failed to keep it spinning.

Tostie forfeited the seal ring with the singing bird, which she still wore. Conspicuous in her white dress decorated with pale mistletoe, she was compelled to stand as a statue while she was put into various attitudes which are clear before me now as visions of a cruel mirage. A beautiful Druidical statue she looked to me and

very well she stood the treatment, for she had stiffened herself by walking to the villa with me, instead of employing Buddle. Why she should so martyr herself I could not imagine, since she was lost in her scarlet riogolette and cloak as far as I was concerned and would not even rest her hand upon my arm.

When she had sufficiently ransomed the ring, it was tossed back to her, and she idly let it roll to my feet where I picked it up. Immediately after, I was told to dust the drawing-room ornaments and began with the queen of the mistletoe. Screened by the active use of my feather brush, I was adroitly slipping the ring back upon the hand she raised to defend herself when she looked up at me defiantly.

"Why don't you let Mr. Monroe give it to me himself?" said she, still holding up the arm, that wore the tiger bracelet. Whether she had discovered the ring's owner from the colonel or was saucily guessing, made no difference to me. I afterward learned that Patty, though she had never noticed the ring to me, had informed herself and Tostie all about it.

Back went the ring on my own hand with a vow to humiliate myself no more to right our misunderstandings, and glad I was to throw my whole self into a laugh over John Dolliver Junior. He was sprawled on the piano stool, his few inches of arm and leg giving a forcible exhibition of the training in swimming I had been giving him at the Pump Room baths. Mr. Trent's boys were looking on with hilarious interest, innocent chaps home for Xmas prog with all the latest English improvements acquired at the Rugby grocer's foundation, from black-and-blue cricket legs up to high hats and white party fronts. They made a tool of little John for their own amusement.

During the rest of the evening, the fated young chub might have been continually discovered standing on one leg and striking out with his hands. He went in and out the drawing room and the supper room, making the same motion, puffing and blowing as if he were half under water. I had my eye on him, thinking, alas! nothing of him in connection with the morrow nor with the tall figure in the white

dress which out of sight was never out of mind with me. Patty's gifts to her flock were hung on the Moultrie Villa tree, a donation of French candies to the general public being there also, for all of which purchases she had confidently inclosed a true bill and full to myself.

The next morning I was setting out for the railroad station in compliance with a request from Mrs. Victor to meet her there on her return from Birmingham, when Pearl, in a tempest of trouble, rushed after me to say little John was missing, had disappeared most inconsequentially after partaking of a hearty bowl of bread and milk. Search had been made without avail.

Colonel Monroe was on his way with Branch to the Pump Room for his morning glass of mineral water. Hearing of the misfortune, he willingly turned back from his errand and went to make my apology to Mrs. Victor. I scoured each favorite haunt of the lost heir—the college cricket ground, the foundry, the brickmakers' cottages among the fields, the flowery cobbler's garden at the end of a blind alley—but without

result, and as a last resort tried the station where the engines had been a source of unmixed delight to him.

There did I see not Patty's little son but Patty herself, stealing home without even the escort of her girl friends. She was brown as a hazelnut from walking a windy deck all the way over the channel. She had been so braced by eagerness to get back to her children, she had not had a touch of seasickness, and moreover she had come back with her former warm sisterly friendliness to myself restored. A report of the slight earthquake we had suffered one night in Leamington had started her home.

"I just knew," said she shamefacedly, "how that old Cummingite of a housekeeper at our lodgings would think the end of the world had come and frighten all my poor little dears out of their seven senses. Pearl will be about giving them their breakfast," she continued radiantly, in vain trying to conceal her joy at getting back, "and we'll bounce right in on them. I have a whole circus for Jack, saucy scamp, under my cloak."

I felt as if the earthquake had returned. People talk about the imaginative exhausting themselves with unnecessary fears, but it seems to me it is the prosaic lovers of routine who continually suffer from the shock of finding the world full of horrible true fairy tales. As Patty and I sped along from the Great Western Station, walking at my earnest suggestion so that I might collect my thoughts about announcing Jack's departure to her, I was annoyed by flopping footsteps after us.

I looked round expecting to see Bathchair Buddle and was confronted by the solemn countenance of Clay Monroe's bloodhound with water trickling from his head and body. I concluded he had come up dripping from a cold plunge in the Leam. That Clay had arranged for some special object to meet Mrs. Victor at Birmingham, or probably elsewhere, and to give his father a pleasant surprise, was easy guessing. It was a much more characteristic advent for him than to appear at an appointed time preceded by letter and telegram.

The colonel had been late in reaching the



Avenue Station and Clay, impatient at my non-arrival, had left Mrs. Victor there alone. He had gone to his father's usual morning resort at the Pump Room and arrived in time to recover John Dolliver, Junior from a premature eclipse in the baths.

One of the Rugby Trents had inveigled him there to test his swimming powers, taking him out of the diningroom glass doors and down the alley while Pearl's back was turned. When Clay appeared, the kidnapper was roaring for help. John Dolliver, Junior had gayly toddled too far down the bath's steps and, instead of turning back, had run on frightened down the grades of the tank after he felt the water closing over his head till he was far beyond his tempter's assistance and returned to the surface gagged and motionless.

It was the hound who pulled him out, but Clay received the credit of the rescue, and very suited he looked to the part. We met him at Patty's door, the drowned heir in his arms red and chuckling in the midst of the hot Pump Room towels with which Clay had lined the foppish

overcoat he had taken off for an ambulance. Clay looked down at Patty without speaking, a beautiful flush of excitement on his face, his lips quivering with emotion, and his eyes soft in a smile of sympathy. He had never appeared in a more favorable aspect, nor I, the luckless guardian, to greater disadvantage. I put my hand out to catch Daisy as she danced round her mother.

"No," said she, switching her short dress away from my grasp, "I want the rosy-cheeked man to carry me in-doors."

I looked to Patty to tell me I had out heroded Herod, but Patty had come back with a firm determination to be my friend.

"He ought to have a good, sound whipping for frightening his Uncle Major," said she as she hugged the miscreant.

A glow of relief came over me to be followed by dismay, for Patty heaped all my delinquencies on Tostie and widened the breach between us with all her might. I had to patiently watch Tostie putting in practice with Clay all the kindly charity I had impressed on her. Instead

of being wild with him as formerly she was extremely gentle, as if she were proudly showing Patty she could be as womanly as herself and answering my question about righting the wrong she had done him. To tell the discourteous truth, the change evidently palled upon Clay. He would resign her upon the slightest excuse to his father's company.

"You can't be expected to be honey to more than one bear at a time," I heard him say once as he made off with himself to Mr. Trent's garden of rosebuds.

Under the blowing shades of the half-open French windows there, many an evening as I walked home from Patty's quiet lodgings, I recognized Clay's among the black shoes dancing in the buzz of petticoats. Usually they were close to Nina Trent's satin bootlets. Half ashamed, I used to linger for a glimpse of one of Tostie's familiar dresses, but I never found her there. I should not like to say if I were glad or sorry.

A noble and terrible rage comes over me too late as I think that no one, I least of all, recog-

nized the anomaly of her position ; a pretty and interesting girl taken up and put down, invited here and left out there, with no one to stand for her but her own young self. That was deceiving enough to all of us, such ease came over her manners when she was wounded, such a look of careless strength as fate led her—gray eyes steady, sweet chin firm, tall figure unbending—through the streets of Leamington, the supposed nursery of reasonable existence, to Clay's world of sensation and her ugly trouble.

I heard her softly singing with Clay one late afternoon, in the time of snowdrops and daffodils, as they rode past Mr. Boulanger's garden. I had taught her the song. She had gone well with me. She went better with Clay. If she thought of me at all, she knew I was within Mr. Boulanger's house, alone with dry statistics. I had no pity for her when Clay left her at home, and swinging little Nina Trent in evening dress up on the vacant saddle, rode again past the garden, this time tantivy, his handsome face laughing close to his rosy startled companion's, his hand upon her horse's reins.

Between Canada and England, he had been down again in the panic of war. He had come up out of the bloody heart of battle, as flippanant and detached as a curl of its smoke.

"Did I get leave of absence again? No, sir," he answered me one stormy evening as we kept tent together. "I could only have gotten leave of absence to be buried. I skedaddled, and on my way sent back plans of my errand. For I would have you understand, my conscience," with his old affectionate way of resting his hands on my shoulders, "I am no more one of Leamington's loungers than I am one of its invalids. You need not prepare to use your demoralizing influence in providing beforehand for my sin. I have come out to sell cotton, the late Dolliver cotton among the lot, for firearms. There you have a secret even my father only guesses at, confided with all my heart," smiling close to my face, "to your honor. If I come across Englishmen who don't read Victoria's writing the way other folks do, I am willing to take all the blame they'll get, which won't be next to anything, I can promise you."

He paused, watching me attentively. He knew I was the only one in the town who would question his proceedings, but I had had a hard rebuff from happiness and love. I had lapsed into my old imbittered loneliness, and I did not wish to be my brother's keeper any longer. I let him off only to be taught with an everlasting heart thrust that there is always some one sacrificed to a wrong doer released. I treated him to silence which was a sure decoy to his eager confidences.

"I have no doubt," he continued, drawing his chair close beside mine and thoroughly enjoying his oration about himself, "you know why I am so cocksure about this venture. It is not the least dandy thing in a matter of this kind to have a West Indian widow well known, wealthy, and unincumbered, to give her word of mouth as well as word of hand for it. You have heard of Birmingham. Perhaps you've heard of its firearms? Perhaps you've heard of Hyde, a retired spot for an ambitious lady to renew her bloom, or rather her curls, if I must be accurate? Perhaps you've heard of Man-

chester near Hyde, and the factories in both places crying out for cheap short staple cotton?"

He stopped abruptly, a childish distress in his face.

"Mrs. Victor is the best-hearted woman in the world. She's awfully kind to me, Duane, she really is," he continued. He paced the room and flung things at his dog, who quietly rose and sat down between my knees, looking up at me with unspeakable feelings in his solemn eyes. "I almost wish she was not," he said restlessly. "She must have her toll, of course, and I have to pay it on a road that leads from 'the track divine.'" From which I was quick to gather that if he satisfied Mrs. Victor he would not keep his promise to Tostie about the weight on her mind, the will registered abroad and the estate never properly administered.

He sat down in a rocking chair and rocked himself gently, smiling throughout a long silence. A thrill of pain went through me from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot as I watched him and guessed the goddess of his thoughts. The pain returns though I guessed

wrongly. After that he persistently avoided meeting me alone as if he were afraid of telling me what he would not. He was generally to be seen with Mrs. Victor, when not away on his secret negotiations, and Tostie with the colonel.

"Seems to be fixing for a family party," said Patty, looking at me significantly and waiting with her eyes fixed on me for a confession of my sentiments. Her inquisitiveness was not rewarded. "I wish Clay joy of his bargain," she added testily. "It is better he should be deceived than a nobler man."

The family party was enlarged and enlivened by a visit from the colonel's granddaughter, Antonetta, the child of that daughter living in the gloomy castle on the Baltic. She was a maid of honor in a Scandinavian court, an unpretentious, simply dressed young girl, broad of face and fair of hair. She had come to spend a six weeks holiday with her grandfather. Her company drew Tostie still farther away from Patty, therefore from me, but we all met toward the end of the guest's stay.

"You must join our Confederate party at dinner on Tuesday evening," said Mrs. Trent to me. "You know it is a send-off to the colonel's granddaughter. Come out of your industrious shell for once. It is your duty. Come, and I will prove it to you by pleasures you have not thought of."

"Delightful little spring rabbits, I hope," echoed Mrs. Victor. "Oh, yes, do come, dear Major. Clay was saying to Tostie this morning, in his humorous way, that you're so played up to the ceiling by your good conscience you soon won't be able to recognize us fopdoodles."

I went and alas! the unexpected came of it as usual. It was May day. The evening air was rich with the scent of blossoms. Maypole mendicants were still straggling through the streets singing their cheerful ditties in sad, thin, nasal voices, their homely faces crowned with the most beautiful of wreaths, May thorn with its thick bunches of fairy roses and pink-streaked buds. How poignantly I remembered last year's thorn at Guy's Cliff mill!

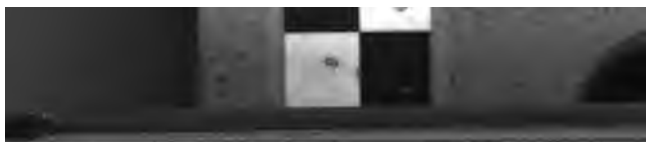
Branch walked by my side to the house, my



sworn friend forever. Mrs. Trent had expected the assistance of Mrs. Lethenty's butler, Buttery, but upon Pearl's confiding to me that Branch's heart was broken at being cast in the shade by an Englishman when he had won his spurs years before in a Confederate pantry, I successfully used my good offices for him. He had been over earlier in the day to the scene of festivities with a bottle of the filé which the Indians carry into Sweet Bay, and had concocted a gumbo acceptable even to the British. I for one was certainly warmed by it or perhaps by the fact that a pair of gray eyes sought mine more than once, unsuccessful as I was in detaining them. All went well till the Jolly Joker exclaimed that he had been served to a lark by mistake, for we dined without ceremony and Antonietta was free and easy as any.

"Speaking of larks," continued the Joker, "what do you all say to this piece of skylarking?"

He drew a photograph from his pocket and passed it round the table, Tostie receiving it first and I last. Tostie took it with a smile of



recognition and continued to smile carelessly as it was greeted with acclamation on its tour of exhibition. It was a picture of herself, taken on one of those visits with Patty to the photographer. She had allowed the latter to avail himself of her long-enduring power of posing and make a very good fancy article which he called "Heavenward." She was represented flying through the air, her eyes and clasped hands directed upward, her hair and dress streaming on the wind. There was a becoming light on her face, her bared neck and arms were lovely enough; but thus she was being sold to any buyer round town at a few shillings a dozen, and she was utterly indifferent.

I slipped the card into my pocket, observed only, I thought, by its purchaser, who gave me a friendly wink; but the evening had not begun to wither till Tostie was at my side, saying, curtly, "My photograph, if you please, Mr. Duane."

She was the first of my acquaintance to drop the title of my vanished office, but I cast pride to the winds. For once I have a recollection

untainted by regret. I pleaded for the picture as gallantly as I had natural ability to do.

"Thank you for the distinction of refusing you," said she, taking the photograph firmly away from me; but she could not veil a look of triumph and, I flattered myself, of pleasure.

The next morning, seizing on the convenient opportunity of Daisy's being reproduced at the gallery for her papa, in a wonderful Parisian block hat adorned with snail shells and grasses, I escorted her there. I helped to reconcile her to being placed among dusty artificial flowers, her head braced amid scenery of trees and a river. While her inquisitiveness was thus imprisoned, I bought the negative of "Heavenward" at a rare price and all the duplicates on sale.

But I betrayed myself, self-killing dolt that I was, at the street door. I stopped to stuff the photographs into the blue paper case with the plate, and exposed all to Tostie, who had come to meet Patty, whom she supposed with Daisy. Give me tears, give me cruel words, give me anything but the white look of pain that came



over her face as she read my unmeant rebuff of her impropriety. She turned on her heel without a word and fled away, I running and Daisy screaming after.

"I have a peremptory summons for you to appear in Mrs. Victor's parlor," said old Colonel Monroe that evening, smiling with great amusement. "Answer the signal for close action, and my good wishes go with you."

He was the best friend I had. He had been telling good of me all the months past, and his friendship for Tostie was his weak stratagem to come between her and his son. But I distrusted him, and my unfaith increased as in the dull lamplight of Mrs. Victor's parlor, in the presence of that august lady, Tostie spread before me a document evidently prepared under his direction. I need no effort to recall its words. It is the only bit of law entrapment written on my brain—a breach of promise paper full and unmistakable.

In consideration of the return of the "Heavenward" negative and cards which I had fortunately brought with me, I was released from



all and all manner of action and actions, cause and causes of action, suits, debts, dues, sums of money, claims and demands, whatsoever, in law or in equity which Annie Austin Carroll ever had or might have against me from the beginning of the world to these presents. In witness whereof Mrs. Victor signed her name in silent dignity and Annie Austin Carroll put her hand and seal to the instrument.

That it was an instrument of torture to me goes without saying. I had no laugh to call up to destroy it, no words to bandy over its presumptions. I had been made a public joke, and that by a chit of a girl. I laid down the photograph packet, put the certificate in the pocket where I once thought I had worn Tostie's writing against my heart, and solemnly shook hands with the girl and her pseudo-guardian.

"Good-by," said I at the room door, throwing back my head with a rude roar of laughter. "Good-by forever."

My tall head struck the top of the low door-frame. A twinge of pain reminded me of that accolade, that initiation in my course of humil-



iation received so long before—the powder-mark among my sandy locks. I recklessly laughed aloud again as I reached the street and mistook a soft step hurrying after me for a girl's. It was the hound turning aside from escorting Clay to take my place in Mrs. Victor's parlor.

"All serene?" the colonel called out from his room as I returned.

I heard him feel his blind way toward me along the wall of the dim hall. I slammed my door in his face, my reverence for age, my sympathy for affliction clean forgotten.



CHAPTER IX.

A SOCIAL DEFORMITY.

I WHO wanted to be a friend to all the world had no friends left but John Dolliver's family. I was feverish to take them away from Leamington before their friendship for me was contaminated, and through the sad mysteries of Providence I found an excuse to do so.

Poor John had not been considered as neutral as he really was. He had been made a prisoner by the Federals in Kentucky. This was our first news of him after an exhausting silence. All the tonic of Patty's trip to Paris vanished like a comforting dream. Her lambs strayed into forbidden paths unhindered, had narrow escapes from indulgence in mammoth gooseberries, and patronized Mr. Plum's bakery with alarming frequency.

Other folks now laugh at the solemnities of

common life. It was a serious symptom to me when Patty ordered English beef off her table because it was covered with grated horseradish and reminded her that flour was a thousand dollars a barrel, counting by Confederate money, in the unhappy land of cotton. She would take no more constitutionals on the broad gravel of Holly Walk because one of her little sprigs spied a hatchment on a lordly mansion at the end and, while rooks were cawing dismally in the stately trees, cried out, "See the dead man's letter box!"

She forsook her favorite haunt, the piny acres of the Arboretum on the Tachbrook Road, because the band played "Dixie" in compliment to the most frequent of its foreign visitors. She took to tears and sewing and had plenty of assistance in both occupations. The feminine portion of our community was busy preparing for the Southern Bazaar to be held in Liverpool, bedewing their work and rusting their needles with genuine weeping. All the talk was of those dying of want in a land of plenty; of men suffering from sickness, wounds, and



deprivation of every comfort of life ; of multitudes of widows to whom nothing remained, of orphans unable to help themselves. Many a letter was read in those Dorcas meetings which narrated war's bluff buffetting of old familiar friends—delicate women and frightened girls—and which bred a real physical pain in the readers.

The air was lively with a smell of penny paints and turpentine as small girls illuminated texts for the bazaar while small boys industriously hacked out cardboard puppets, and shaped gutta-percha freaks. I remember their elders as principally engaged in ornamenting domestic ticking with miles of narrow velvets and ribbons, incorporating beads and spangles with a stupendous waste of time and thought, and turning out the most uncomfortable pillows I have ever leaned my weary head against.

Clay Monroe was invaluable in collecting odd and effective materials on his various jaunts, assuming liabilities with the most chivalrous recklessness and blowing assets to the winds of chance. Branch was continually employed in



the delivery department, his arms freighted with bundles from Coventry and elsewhere, and his mind weighted with the thought of four million slaves free, he being very uncertain as to whom they were to get their future living "off of." He stuck like a leech to me as a hopeful contingency, whenever Clay spared his leisure from the colonel.

Clay's short moments of repose were confined to gallantries among the bazaar workers. A very engaging Sardanapalus he appeared, and more robust than that concerning Patty. It might not be altogether pleasing to witness his demonstrative sympathy with her and her frequent preference of so fresh and inventive a friend to one well proved but gravely troubled, yet sincerity was in his eye and assistance his motive.

"I have an idea, a glorious one!" he exclaimed one day, devoting himself fiercely to his writing desk and to the sending out of important dispatches, for which he borrowed the money from me.

"We are out or near the bottom," he cried



gayly as the summer bloomed again and freckled cowslips gave way once more to a host of roses.

Right in the flaming heart of July, he broke in upon the shaded room where a band of women were sadly sewing, and like a herald of the sun in darkness, glowing and laughing with enthusiasm, he literally threw himself at Patty's feet and told her he had recovered her husband from imprisonment. A relative, a famous raider, had entered Kentucky with his dreaded guerilla cavalry and taken a Federal officer prisoner, paroling and exchanging him for John Dolliver, whom he started toward the coast. Clay told the tale poetically, fire in his eye and emotion in his voice.

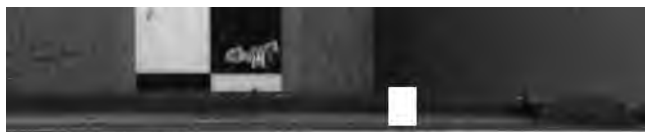
"Of course," said he, "the newspapers will never know the real state of the case and will make little of it, but it is Cousin's most brilliant achievement. When the poor fellow bagged that Federal, he only had time to embrace his own mother on the pavement, leap into his saddle, and scoot."

Then he ranted off about the immense stores the raider must have gathered up, horses, men,

and so forth. He boasted of the plunder, day in and day out; the soldier-keeper of our lodgings offsetting him by personal Crimean reminiscences, giving him the hint that Birmingham supplied the government during that war with three thousand muskets weekly. It was a positive godsend when his attention was turned to an unexpected topic.

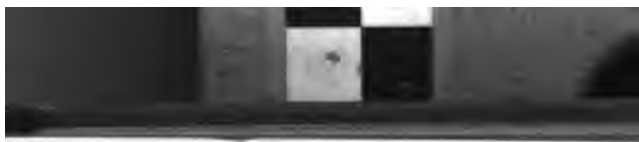
"Here's a touch of kinship for you, Duane," said he one morning, coming in with an open letter in his hand. "Tiberius White writes from Carlsbad that he has ordered Thierry of Paris to forward his last order here. Isn't that characteristic? Just about the whole fellow. He thinks he'll make our eyes blink with a lot of shoes which would no more hold his gouty feet than they would Buddle's."

Buddle may be said to have been foot and horse for this newcomer all the time he was in Leamington, so wedded was he to a Bath chair and the Royal Pump Room, trying to expiate his merry life and drown out his old enemy, the gout, with the saline waters of the Spa. He could quote the Bible from beginning to end.



Perhaps that rather pathetic taste for high things and his excellent business credit have fructified in the one member of his family who has kept herself unspotted from the newspapers, living her healthy, humble rule of right with as unbiassed a view of fashionable society as a preacher in a country parsonage.

Yet my liveliest recollection of the conversation of Tiberius concerns the parsimonies of the great, those tidbits of private management—corned beef and bean soup the week after a French feast—which he related with relish. Whether he unwittingly revealed something of his own experience, I do not know. His wife was one of the most queenly entertainers of her time. I have heard him boast, among other extremely personal anecdotes, of her being caught in her dressing sacque and petticoat and receiving a full drawing room, undisturbed and to the admiration of the guests. She was, I know, counted on as the special ornament of every assembly to which she was invited, and doubtless transmitted her elegance to that scion



who has figured in one of the most famous of international marriages.

The last time I saw Mrs. Tiberius White, shortly before her end, she was hobbling on a stick, and leaning all her hopes on various remedies for her nerves and broken constitution. At the date of the entry of Tiberius into Leamington, she was engaged in France procuring eiderdown mattresses with blue satin covers. She was also superintending the invention of a safe for her jewels, to be concealed behind a mirror in her American home. I am sure the secret must have been long out ere this, and where Tiberius has strayed I need not fear to be called a telltale.

He was intensely interested in the gilt room at Warwick and the crimson velvet bed furniture of the state chamber. Whether he gleaned from his frequent excursions to Coombe Abbey and Stoneleigh Abbey any ideas for a Cistercian breakfast parlor or a great *salon* with which his wife might astonish the 'natives of our Northern States, I cannot say.

"I must confess," said he, more than once,

"Coombe and Stoneleigh are a weakness of mine, the Cravens and Leighs were so loyal to the Stuart dynasty."

Thus he would find his pretext to wail over the recent death of the Confederate general of that royal name, the knight of the yellow sash and gold spurs. He missed Clay's ready echo, for Clay was growing more and more preoccupied, and finally went off alone for a jaunt through Scotland. The reports of himself he sent back were sparse and slim. I was prepared, with what feelings I need not state, to hear of his definite disappearance from our horizon. On the excuse of a rainy trip, he had not yet returned when an English general, a K. C. B., summering on one of the Crescents, invited the available male contingent of our party to dine with him.

With all modesty, I was aware that the courtesy was due to my congenial acquaintance with the general through Mr. Boulanger, but Tiberius White, ever blinded by his self-trimmed light, assumed the attention as directed to himself. He felt called upon to enliven the

stiff English dinner by an individual touch on every subject that was introduced. Our host expressed his opinion of the position in which, the year before, the British naval commander-in-chief on the North American and West Indian station had been placed by the order not to enter any port of the United States unless compelled to do so by the necessities of the service. The matter was taken up and rolled around the board.

"I pity any one," said Tiberius, edging in his irrelevant say, "confined to the West Indies when Camela Victor is away. You have not heard of her in Paris, Major Duane? You astonish me. She takes all the thunder out of the gay Medora, I do assure you, woman of color though she may be, and that fact it is very hard to perceive. The temptation of Medora's late brother-in-law in marrying his housekeeper is not very difficult to understand. She came from the Indies with one of the cargoes from Victor's plantation—sugar to sweeten a load of coffee—and opened a house. We all know those Sweet Bay lodgings for bachelors and men



away from their families on business. Anything cleaner, cooler, or more restful I have not discovered in this world of toil. Victor was alone, always had been, probably always would be, for—between you and me, and no offense to any other neglected bachelor—he was uncommon homely. Camela's voice was sweet, her manner soft, her appearance as taking as any belle's on Sweet Bay boulevard. You have the tale. Where they concealed the children which Victor brought over here to legitimate when he married their mother, I cannot imagine. I have never seen them."

I listened with interest to this definite information of Mrs. Victor's bugbear, that sister-in-law of Rector Geffrard, for whom Tostie had taken up the cudgels, and whose silken garments I had assisted Clay to burn.

"I defy any one," continued Mr. White, "to show me a more graceful hostess than Camela. I gave myself the pleasure of dining with her during her husband's lifetime. I did not wonder in the least that she had been honored by an invitation to a ball at the Tuileries, but she

is quite too modest. She refused the opportunity for fear a mistake had been made, and detection with her would mean disgrace."

With no dread of mistakes concerning his own modesty, his high voice rambled on till it was eclipsed by the lid of Buddle's chair, a Scriptural farewell in its last issue. Buddle, a little more beery than usual, flopped after the chair, thickly singing an oblivion of His Elegance within:

"I went to the fair to sell my eggs,
Whom should I meet but Bandy Legs;
Bandy legs and crooked toes,
Stirabout cheeks and teapot nose."

As some people are affected by the unseen nearness of a cat, so am I by the approach of a human being who disturbs me. I walked home, the strings of street lights sparkling on the dusky bosom of midnight. I was oppressed by a sense of coming danger.

I found not Clay Monroe himself, but a surprising letter awaiting me at my lodgings. It inclosed the full amount of the note I held for



John Dolliver. Gaines O'Barr had written to Clay to pay me the money to satisfy John Dolliver, whose interests he professed to have to secure from a well-intentioned but defective paper, "thus obviating," he took the opportunity to write to Clay with irritating impudence, "the necessity of proceedings as disagreeable to me as to you."

Where Clay, in a hot fit of temper, had raised the money to send me, I could not imagine. He had had no time to communicate with his fellow-signers of the note and he had told me they were as poor as winter grasshoppers. I had the deepest contempt for all of Gaines O'Barr's doings and an indulgent interest in Clay which I never overcame. It seems unnecessary to state that I sent the latter the note canceled and returned his remittance full and free.

Thus, thoughtlessly, I gave him individual possession of the cotton he had procured from John Dolliver's agent in exchange for the note. And thus I gave him a chance to drag my old friend's name, by a boyish stratagem, into his risky venture to supply the Confederacy with

materials for war and necessities of life. Nothing, if it had not been providentially kept from her, would have cut into Patty's happiness as deeply as a slur on her husband's name.

O'Barr had mentioned incidentally in his communication that he was creditably advised Dolliver was turned aside again from his ocean journey by an attack of billious intermittent fever. Determined that the news should not reach Patty, and with an enervating dread that her husband was developing the seeds of yellow fever from the threatened epidemic in Sweet Bay, I cast myself upon Mrs. Lethenty's friendship, and begged her to beguile the little mother and her flock to Scotland, myself the indispensable guard of honor.

"Pray do not take them to Perthshire, dear major," said Mrs. Victor, suddenly renewing her acquaintance with me and slandering Scotland with a persistence which, strangely enough, did not excite my curiosity. "Their complexions will be all rusted by the sun on the hills and their lungs filled with scorched heather. I know you are saying to yourself 'that naughty

Mrs. Victor does not deserve to be answered at all,' but indeed you do not know the cruel stress which has been brought to bear to cut off my tender interest from you."

She wormed her way to a garden party given to a few Americans by the Honorable Miss Milne, for whose large natural chignon she had a worrying antipathy. She failed to wheedle me into an arbor among the beeches of Miss Milne's lovely lawn, though she directed a footman, in my hearing, with many pointed grimaces at me, to serve tea for two there. So she purposely wandered into the secluded deer park, disturbed an anxious doe, and shrieked for protection. I was not the only one to respond. To single me out she took the gold pencil at her watch chain and, when she was supported to a garden seat, scribbled on the edge of her fan and waved slowly back and forth under my nose the following appeal:

"My head is very much affected and I have to go down among my boxes in the storage-house. Will no one take my place among those grating men in corduroys?"

I stopped the fan in its flight and read the message loud enough to reach the ears of my hostess, who was a rare pink of propriety and for whose good opinion of my dignity I had a sincere desire.

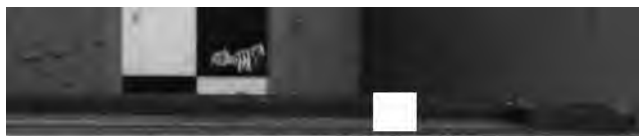
"Why, certainly, Mrs. Victor," said I, still loudly, "I shall be most happy to do your errand. The storage house is a dusty, unsuitable place for a dainty lady at any time, whether its guards are in corduroys or silk velvet."

Thus, neatly trapped and carefully instructed, I went among Mrs. Victor's packing cases, selected a large black one marked "14," lifted its tray, took out a light-colored wooden box with steel ornamentations tied with a ribbon, and forwarded it to Clay Monroe at Glasgow. Mrs. Victor received me, on my return, with an incomprehensible, triumphant smile.

"So you have great faith in Confederate government bonds," said she.

"Not a particle of faith," said I.

"But you think Clay Monroe's offer of them to pay for the shipping of his goods South a very good thing?"



"Believe me," I answered, startled, "this is the first time I have heard of it. Had I not been sure his venture for the Confederacy would turn out fruitless and only give him a salutary lesson, I should have felt called upon to interfere long ago."

"But you have just sent him all my jewels to vouch for the bonds," she exclaimed. "Now I have nothing in their place but a small bonus—I assure you a very small amount of ready money—with the promise of those bonds."

But she continued to smile triumphantly and at the station, where she appeared to bid our Scotland party godspeed, she reiterated at every opening: "Of course I have only a small amount of cash, but I am trusting in your honor to see me through, dear major."

She even forgot her prejudices against my going to Scotland till Tostie appeared on the scene, when she whispered with vehemence: "If you come across the name of Victor in Scotland linked to a social deformity, blame that girl and no one else."

Tostie was on the field, I supposed, to inter-

cept her aunt's confidences with me. There was a drooping of her honest eyes and a faint agitation in her voice as she gave me a forgotten packet from Colonel Monroe, who had treated me much better than I deserved. Whatever the justice of my cause, my feelings were still such that I would no more have had her kneel to me than I would have returned fawning to her like a whipped dog.

I met her timid advances with the most smiling cordiality I could assume. My heart was struck with pain and mystification, when she shrank from my free greeting as if I had wounded her. My own many wounds were slight in comparison with those which were to come.

"Oh, fleeting joys of paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!"

In my last view of her she was streaking home alone, her proud head bent. Even the "Methodist bishop," that saint of daily comfort, overlooked the girl as she hurried from adieus to us to remember her Wesleyan minister, according to her custom, at the market where she



dealt. I could see the kind old parish priest, Father Jeffries, was gazing another way and did not return the lonely creature's nod.

I wondered if Mr. Lethenty guessed that I grasped her hand involuntarily, as she sat beside me in the railway carriage, because I knew she had left a warm kiss on each of Tostie's cheeks. The sun winked through the window blind at the colonel's packet, which revealed to me once more, like an ever-recurring Nemesis, the ring with the singing bird. Clay had petulantly thrown it in the Leam when I said I had worn it long enough. The bloodhound had spent days in recovering it, and the colonel sent it to me with the request—a puzzling one—that I would wear it in Scotland and advise him of whatever adventure it brought me.

Lambert Lethenty was all agog at the incident, and when our expedition reached its base camp at the Bridge-of-Allan it was to his thirst for story subjects that I was indebted for the only semblance of an adventure I had in Scotland and for the finding of the social deformity in the Victor family. On the day of our arrival,

having left Patty's brigade comfortable in lodgings and Mrs. Lethenty resting at the well-house after resuming at the mineral springs her Leamington regimen of saline waters, Lambie and I climbed a wooded hill of the beautiful village and drank a great draught of Ochil air. It gave me a glorious feeling of strength.

I longed to leap upon a snorting, champing steed and charge across the green carse spread out below me. Imagination placed my love in the sentried castle of Stirling beyond. She would be nearer to me than in her present liberty. I would storm the steep height. I would have her willy-nilly. The Links of Forth glittered through the rich vale like a mocking serpent. I was glad I was in a land where words are few.

A group of silent, barelegged children were hunting through the grass for an aftermath of strawberries. Hanging timidly on the edge of the company and eyeing us strangers with a troubled glance was a little lad, carefully shod. He was as delicate and sallow as his playmates were rugged and ruddy.



“Oh, non! for somebody!” exclaimed Lethenty, under his breath. “I thought we had run across a Hindoo ghost.” He jingled some coin in a pocket. “Come here, laddie, and tell us is there any place where we can get away from a sight of the Wallace monument?”

Laddie opened wide his melancholy eyes and fled down the hill.

“Who are you?” shouted Lethenty, all excited.

“Son of a gentleman,” the fugitive called back defiantly.

“Son of Camela Victor,” said Lethenty.



CHAPTER X.

ORANGE BLOSSOMS.

It was not to be expected that my friend Lethenty would let the little outcast run away from him for good and all. Though we did not see anything of him for a day or two and though I utterly refused to let my curiosity involve me in any unwarranted search for this new class of exiles we had overtaken, Lambie's imagination was busy picking up links.

"Do you remember," said he, "that the month of August holds the anniversary of the abolition of slavery in all British territory? These little Victors will not be the first unfortunates brought to Britain, indeed to Scotland from the States to be legitimated. If my memory is not deluding me, we had just such another case recorded in the thirties."

As we went to Westerton Park on the morn-



ing of the Strathallan meeting for Scottish Games, he pointed out footprints laughably like the great toemarks of Clay Monroe's bloodhound. They were in a path running through a patch of woods on the estate of a nobleman, a cripple and a kindly sympathetic body. The path had been made days before when the track was modelled in it and had dried without smoothing. Having done all he could to make me feel eerie about it, Lethenty introduced me at the games to a place on the grand stand where I could be further trained for surprises by the bagpipe competition in strathspeys, quicksteps and reels.

I never sat among patronesses where an utter lack of beauty in person and dress was rendered of so little moment by distinction and high-breeding. We had no celebrities among our patrons but one baronet, one knight, and one admiral; but we were graced by such a spirit of good-fellowship that we were under the very thumb of chieftain, henchman, champion, and herald to applaud or disfavor as desired. Even I began to feel lenient to the skirling of the



pipes and discovered a voice of melody amid the battles of the *chanters* and the *drones* like a precious little stream bubbling fearlessly on among mournful sougning winds, the sweeter perhaps for contrast.

The pipers, blown purple, had come safely through the beauteous agonies of Ghillie Callum. Red Donald and Yellow Duncan and all the other great-limbed, plumed and plaided Highlanders had finished their dancing, supple knee and feather foot dazing danger among the hungry swords. By proxy we had wrestled, vaulted, raced three-legged, run a hop-step-and-leap, run a high leap, hurdled, sacked, put the ball, thrown the hammer, and accomplished all the other idiocies of strength. To the tunes of the Camelon Band we had come down from the grand stand to the tilting-at-the-ring open only to the great such as we. Under the stand was a refreshment room. At its door was a slight confusion.

The boy of Lethenty's search had tried to escape from the police in charge of the ground by slipping in there. He had innocently

entered the park without paying. Far from shunning Lethenty and myself this time, he willingly came to me. His solemn eyes were fixed on my outstretched hand with which I had freed him by a subsidy to an officer. His little hand had hardly touched mine till it glided again from my grasp and took with it Clay's ring, its owner disappearing in the crowd like a wink of powder in a well.

"Steady!" whispered Lethenty to me. "Don't fire before the police. That is no thief, I am sure. We'll just work up this little mystery ourselves. I have been watching that little Victor's elder brother this half-hour. He's been in two of the boys' races—a stolid chap, bigger and heavier than the little one. The races are confined to residents within three miles of the cross. There we have a clew to his home. He has won a prize, so we'll seize him gently when he comes up for it."

Lethenty's face beamed with satisfaction, his voice was full of assurance; but Victor, number two, had fled in anxious curiosity after the first fugitive and did not appear for his prize. It

was late that afternoon, Lethenty had gone to look discreetly for the Victors; I was napping in my clean, cozy room in the Wellwood House when a visiting card was brought to me. On its small, glazed surface—I have it yet—was written in minute letters adorned with delicate flourishes the name “Juan Papa.” In one corner was traced a singing bird.

I hurried down to the quiet little public parlor, my pulses quickening in the flower-scented wind blowing up the staircase from open doors and windows. The picture was in my mind which the card had given me of an effeminate Spanish visitor, a dark, becurled and perfumed troubadour; perhaps—oh, joyful perhaps!—one of those souls, poor and hidden away, of whom Tostie had spoken with overwhelming pity that well-remembered night by the frozen St. Lawrence when her hand lay protected on my arm. To win back Tostie’s favor what might I not do to help them? I was selfishly glad that Lethenty was away.

I stepped into the room and stood aghast before a man of my own height and build, with

hair prematurely gray and a gaunt face marked by the accidental blow of an ally's sugar-knife—a man of many fierce encounters, an exile of revolution. With either hand he held the two Victor boys I had seen and stood quietly for my reception of him. As I hesitated an instant in the embarrassment of surprise, he spoke.

“I am not a man of color,” he said gently, reading with startling insight the thought flashing through my mind. He need not have made the statement. A glance into each other's eyes, those telltales of race, is sufficient to enable the sons of Ham and Japhet to say, “You there and I here,” or “We together.”

Juan Papa had been long accustomed to acquire and transmit knowledge through his falcon eyes. What he did not give out that way was disseminated by his pen through secret agencies. How much of the repressed fire which found this vent has been of late born again in action, who can tell? When he found the rare occasion of a trusty, sympathetic ear, he talked as if he were writing, with carefully selected words and occasional violent emphasis

that reminded me of Mrs. Victor, reminded me too that they must at one time have been thrown together. It had been one of her husband's last acts of kindness, a token of his affection for Monsieur Geffrard, that he had in opposition to her wishes put into the exiled Papa's hands provision for the education of his brother's children on condition that they be brought up away from their mother, who accepted the situation placidly according to her kind.

"Nine years, the best of my life, have I spent in this corner of the world, poor, unknown, forgotten," said Juan Papa to me.

His conversation, as I transcribe it, is varied by no word of mine. It lies before me, as I wrote it down, immediately at the end of our interview, for Colonel Monroe, and as it returned to me upon the colonel's death.

I had taken the smaller boy upon my knee, and as I reassuringly drew his trembling little body to me, he looked up at me and smiled with an altered copy of his father's deep blue eyes and two dimples like Patty's Daisy's in his

cheeks. Growing bolder he slipped back on my finger the ring he had taken away thinking it was the duplicate his guardian wore. It represented a bond of friendship exchanged long before and which Clay had lightly forgotten. The child ran his little finger lightly round the wreath of letters and read—“*Patria cara cantor libertas.*”

His guardian immediately remarked—“Before taking a step advised by Clay Monroe, I should like to submit some remarks to your consideration, Major Duane. Clay has given me the highest opinion of your judgment and kindly interest in all who are in trouble.”

I bowed an acknowledgment and waited with bated breath for the expected opportunity to please Tostie.

“Clay wishes that Alfonso and Consolacion should discontinue their Latin and should be taught what they require to become engineers. By giving up Latin which, by the bye, they most cordially hate, they would have more *time* for their other studies, I grant; but they would not have more *application*. They have now plenty

of *time* for everything. The giving up Latin would increase their idleness, a very dangerous thing at their age."

Alfonso, the elder brother, the winner of the race, who had been so much smarter to find me than Lethenty him, was absorbed in a volume of the "Scottish Chiefs" from the parlor table. Consolacion yawned pathetically and, leaning his head confidingly against me, went to sleep.

"Supposing they made no progress whatever in the study of that language, which cannot *absolutely* be the case," continued Juan Papa, "by being constantly occupied they must acquire the habit of *industry* which, you will allow, is of the utmost importance. As for my poor Alfonso, his becoming an engineer is out of the question. He is very, very dull. His heart is in the right place, however, and I set a far higher value upon that than upon all the mechanical capacity in the world."

He patted dull Alfonso on the hand and left his arm around the boy's shoulder. Alfonso read on and Consolacion snored a little. We were a strange group to meet at the world's end

from our native countries, two childless men without home or profession choosing both these necessities for two worse than orphaned children. I suggested that Colonel Monroe be consulted about this apparently vital subject of a Latin education.

"Oh, no! no!" exclaimed my companion. Clay's last words to me were: 'For God's sake, do not trouble poor father about anything.' The Monroes have a large amount of property, but in the present unexampled and unlooked-for condition of the Southern States they can raise no money on it. Clay found a great source of affliction in being obliged to borrow from me on his recent visit here. As he tells me he loves and trusts you more than a brother, I open my heart to you."

I pricked up my ears and he told me Clay had gotten from him the exact amount of the note which was sent me.

"And the good fellow," said Señor Papa, "paid it back to me a day or two after instead of keeping for himself a lucky chance which had come to him." I was chilled by Clay's goodness.

"I trust Mrs. Victor's jewels reached him safely?" I ventured boldly.

Juan Papa laughed with great amusement. "Oh, yes! Reached him, or rather me," he answered. "Clay failed in his efforts to get a transport built in Glasgow, and is in Liverpool at the shipping yards. His mail and express come here. He does not know Mrs. Medora Victor as well as I. Let me show you her jewels."

He induced me to go, little Consolacion on my shoulder, to the home which his own hands kept for his wards, a little cottage upon the estate of the kindly, crippled nobleman to whom I have referred. We went to it through the trees in the track of Clay's bloodhound.

Juan Papa laughed as he opened the light-colored wooden box with steel ornamentations, tied with a ribbon. It contained an Algerian crescent, gold with a black rim, a gold star above, a fringe of pendants below; a set of pink coral; two hatpins of Genoese filigree; and a foldable parasol with a Venetian beadwork handle, which weighted the box to an amount

that might have deceived any imagination as to the jewels within. The contents were as odd and worthless as Medora herself.

"Clay was not sorry," said Juan Papa, upsetting me again with Clay's goodness. "He was beginning to doubt the value of the Confederate bonds he had offered her. These toys he gives my babies. He had already given her more than the price of them." Mrs. Victor no longer had need—I learned she was sorry she had not—to impose upon my honor.

"That boy," continued Papa, or the Papa, as my dear Patty insists upon calling him, "during his short stay here, lightened the burden that made my existence a curse. *He* showed me filial affection. He is gone and I am again a prey to feelings that tear my heart. Just before his arrival I had been solicited to teach in two boarding schools, which made me the most advantageous and flattering proposals. I declined because I could not think of breaking my sacred trust with these children and I durst not take them away with me. Think not for a moment that I wish to set any value upon that

conduct in your eyes. In refusing what would have been far more profitable to me, I only counted *my* happiness; although I must confess, even if my love for these poor boys had not been so great, my gratitude to Clay Monroe would have led me to the same result. His interest in these boys is great. I suppose you know for whose sake?"

I again had but a nod of assent to give him, though I could have uttered the cry with all my quivering hopes against it, "I know! I know! Who can know so bitterly well as I?"

"Miss Carroll is their guardian angel," he continued. "She gave a good portion of her money to get their papers of legitimation, for their father died before that was accomplished. They are now Victors as surely as their Aunt Medora. Miss Carroll would have helped us further if Mrs. Victor had not also encroached upon her generosity. There's a debt between them I fear the niece will never collect."

I raged inwardly, but what had I to do with it all any more?

"For her sake," continued my unconscious

tormentor, "Clay came here. His father, whom he represents, was an executor for us. No one had thought worth while to administer with me for these poor heirs. Camela was already provided for and I was but an ignoramus in such matters. I was under the impression that uncollectable debts and shrinkage of property had left the estate in Sweet Bay valueless. The little in this country that was under my control was quickly diminishing. Mr. Monroe, however, had been at work for us." He held his handkerchief to his eyes a moment, saying in a trembling voice, "My dear, dear Clay! God Almighty bless him!" The little lads were at his knees ready to break into weeping. He put an arm around each and resumed.

"My dear sir, I need not be ashamed of tears. Believe me, Mr. Monroe's face was wet with tears when I asked him to help me a little on an account of eighty-nine pounds, eleven shillings and eightpence, our expenses for twelve months, including our tailor bill which amounted to *one* pair of trousers for this growing Alfonso. I am convinced it was to his too great haste to



open the banks to us and bountifully replenish us that he was obliged to ask that temporary loan to which I have alluded. Through him and his guiding star to whom our undying gratitude is due, the children are not only on the way to inherit the income of gentlemen but they sleep with the dear thought that their father's name is still a signature on bills receivable."

At the word "gentlemen," the boys straightened themselves with pathetic alacrity.

"Think not hard of Clay Monroe," said my host as I rose to go, "for giving you my ring. If recovering it thus again, I cannot part so easily with the token as he, it is not because I do not feel the temptation with which you inspired him. He has told me of your friend whom the calamities of war have separated from a loving wife. It has occurred to me—I pray you will not deny me—that I can assist their reunion and thus feebly express to you my satisfaction in your acquaintance."

I had decided between Clay and himself by advising the continuation of Latin for the apparently studious Alfonso and a substitute of



preparatory engineering in the open air for fragile Consolacion. I took the little chap myself more than once for a play study of the fortress of Stirling. I had made a pleasant acquaintance at the games with the commandant of the garrison. Consolacion and I had instructive times planning the finish of Mar's Work, tracing the grotesque decorations of the palace walls. Consolacion shuddered at the tale of assassination in the Douglas Room, and could not banish from his mind a visit to an old retainer of the Lethenty's in the military hospital in Argyle's Lodging.

Not all my careful tracing for him of the Bruce's glorious footsteps on the field of Bannockburn, nor the whirring story of the looms near by with their load of tartans for the regiments of the Highlands, could subdue his nervous sympathy. I wonder if he is still as tender-hearted, if he worked out for others the tangled thread his parents had woven in his own life, if he ever thinks of the tall Yankee who found him a comfort for a day or two in the trouble that came, who loved to tote him

through the streets of Stirling old and new. Perhaps in that "little Edinburgh" we brushed against another boy from whose childish talk, we, or at least I, could have had some inkling of "The Greatest Thing in the World," which he was to grow up inspired to tell us. Ah me ! If I could but have learned it then before the mine had sprung beneath my feet !

Under the lee of the hill Consolacion and I exchanged pebble rings in a shop which lovers frequent. It is not fair to surmise where his is now. Mine was given away an age ago to the tenderest hand in the world. To the happy compromise I suggested for Consolacion's benefit, I attributed the letter Juan Papa gave me to a certain Don, a "Vice-Consul Encargado Del Consulado España," on the coast of one of our Southern States. He was to shorten John Dolliver's journey by passing him through the blades of Federal marines to a West Indian boat *en route* to England. Juan Papa retained various connections with the paternal government of his native island, revolutionist though he might be. He called himself reformer.



To expedite the help for John Dolliver, I forwarded the letter to Clay's address in Liverpool where he had taken his father, and begged his intervention and influence for its speedy delivery in the South. To satisfy Juan Papa's grateful emotions, at his earnest desire I wrote to Tostie in Wales an account of Clay's good works, sending her an authorized copy of the Victor will, which had been troublesome because registered in Scotland, and also of the legitimation papers which unfortunately fell into the hands of Mrs. Victor and did not increase her love for her niece.

I cannot say it was an altogether uncongenial task, my first and last letter to Tostie, though I was forced to confine my remarks to Clay's praises. My very unwillingness to put him forward prompted my conscience to say the utmost for him. Never did any one personate best man to a rival as I did. I believe I mentioned that Clay was one to be held in by affection. I did not add that he was deficient in a high moral sense. I said that no doubt the lack of home influence, the quiet opportunity

for reflection and preparation, accounted for his want of self-mastery. The terrible thought is still with me, always will be, "Was it *I* pushed Tostie to the step she took?"

The sun was falling asleep in the blushing embrace of Ben Lomond as I began my letter. From my window in the Wellwood House Lomond's sister Highlands, great and gentle, were drawing near in the rising mist. The Links of Forth were weaving their silver into lovers' knots on the lovely bosom of the Vale of Men-teith. I stopped once to look down at the town's own stream and sing softly "On the banks of Allan water." I stopped, with acute remembrances of English wild flowers, to finger the bouquet Consolacion had plucked for me of soft double white gowans in a ring of holly. I stopped to beg for some of the oatmeal supper in the housekeeper's room whose fragrance came steaming up to me with a vision of home and companionship.

I had still time to stop again and again, for I brooded tenderly over my letter the whole night. I trusted the receiver would read that

between the lines of its careful length, but I erased myself. The sweet dreams into which I fell toward morning might also have had another hero than myself. I wonder if any one but my fated self can dream deliciously, minutely true for another.

I overslept the breakfast hour. The chambermaid arrived and found my bed unused. I fled laughing from the room as she charged the dust upon the carpet with a broom in a wet bag. I went, joyfully fasting, to post my letter. Half-ashamed of myself, I took a seat in a public brake and, like a homesick schoolboy, drove to the post I calculated nearer Wales than Bridge-of-Allan. The greater part of our Leamington company was in Llangollen, the Trents among the rest. Mrs. Victor was in command. It was she who answered the double motive of my letter, frankly, fully, and to Patty.

I had come down one cloudy day from Cambuskenneth Abbey. The wail of violins was in its trees, the bittersweet of altos in the moaning echoes of its displaced stones. The air was



chilling as I reached Patty's lodging. The children were not in. She and Mrs. Lethenty were sitting huddled over a smoking fire they had started in the grate. They greeted my cheerful salute with embarrassment.

"Solve this mystery for us," said Mrs. Lethenty abruptly, handing me a letter Patty had received from Tostie's aunt-in-law.

It began without preamble—"Our inconsiderate landlord hung himself the other day when we were out fishing in the Dee. We were fairly frightened into a wedding in our need of a protector. The advertisement in a London paper of a six-days'-chance for wedding trousseau buyers seemed like the finger of providential fate and afforded us lovely merceries and richest draperies. To me fell the office of second tire-woman. I assure you the fastening of the dress and veil was an ordeal. The way from hotel to church was lined with cottagers through whose ranks it was no small task to have to walk. If you could have but seen our bride at the altar in the fullness of her happiness; graceful, beautiful, color coming and going, shimmer of satin and pearls, sweet composure.

"Very lovingly,

MEDORA.

"Postscript.—Our only regret is that the colonel was not able to come from Liverpool to see his handsome bridegroom son."

"Can it be Nina Trent?" Patty asked, looking up at me with helpless sympathy.

"Mr. Trent accept that jackadandy for a son-in-law!" Mrs. Lethenty exclaimed indignantly.

I raised my hand to her imploringly as I stooped to compose myself by tending the fire. It was an hour of sad and bitter humiliation. I had been cruelly worsted. I could not cover my forced retreat.



CHAPTER XI.

THE SILENT CONQUEROR.

ONCE again I look back at my own desires wiped away that I might take my part in the happiness of others—the blessing of my crucifix. Close after Mrs. Victor's brief, when there had not been time for Juan Papa's passport letter to get so far even as Clay Monroe upon his wedding journey, I received a telegram from Liverpool :

“Landed. Keep cool. JOHN DOLLIVER.”

Thank God for the compelling duty which took my thoughts partly off myself, off Clay and Tostie. Dolliver had not needed Juan Papa's letter, but through Clay's kind offices had successfully run the gauntlet of Federal and Confederate detention and come to us in a West Indian boat as we had wished. We found him

in a dingy hotel in Liverpool whither I piloted his little family with all possible speed.

It was a sweet and pretty sight to see the tables turned and Patty assuming the part of protector, trying hard to understand John's business burdens, but ready to break into tearful laughter every time she came into the sick-room and realized she had him safe with her, or every time he sighed with inexpressible comfort under her ministrations. All the while his anxious words dropped down into my sore heart, pushing me to a task that would send me back to the States more exiled than when I left them—exiled from the still absorbing if hopeless interest of my life.

The port of Sweet Bay had been taken by the Federals in August. The capture of the city itself was but a question of time, the proper presentation and protection of John Dolliver's affairs at its surrender a matter of intense trouble to him. He had been too ill to return to its dangers. He had no one but Gaines O'Barr to rely upon. His relations with that ingrate had become most painful.

"It has been mortifying," he said to me, laying his sick, trembling hand on mine, "to be treated as a child in a concern whose success and character I established."

"I have thought upon circumstances and liabilities," he said wearily another time, "till I have become inert and stupid." And again, hopelessly: "The concern is as good as dissolved, the business done. What will become of my little children? My poor Patty?"

The latter was in a constant state of warding off affectionate attacks upon the invalid from his vigorous offspring. I interrupted a charge from his pair of twin sons one morning and was much alarmed at the grief aroused in their infant bosoms. To soothe the outraged pair and relieve Patty of a little care, I took the twain, just walking, to the Southern Bazaar, for which our American colony had been so busily preparing.

It was the blackest week of a financial panic in Liverpool, but that made no difference within Saint George's Hall, whose use had been granted to the Confederates by the town council. The

hundred thousand dollars and more for the ten thousand prisoners in Elmira and other Southern sufferers from the war, was gathered in those October days under the patronage of a princess, a marquise, a vicomtesse, a baronne, three marchionesses, three countesses, and eight noble ladies.

I and my little footboys were honored by bumping in the crush against his worship the mayor, an earl, two lords, a sir, and several members of Parliament as we went past the brilliant stalls, through the red columns of the hall, under the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy and the silk banners mottoed "Deo Vindice." On one flag I read "Charleston, October 18th, 465th day of the siege." On another "Fort Sumter in ruins, but unconquered." On another the old Revolutionary warning "Don't tread on me."

Dust and ashes were the hopes, the heartfelt calls for sympathy of that gorgeous, feverish assembly. It was like a last, defiant carnival before an awful Lent, a Lent still fasting and wailing through children and grandchildren

though its passion days are over. To dust also have returned most of the busy hands—some of them belonging to the titled—which dealt me out my insignificant purchases, and to dust the sacred fingers of his holiness whose autographs were side by side with donations from his cardinals.

Neither Cardinal Antonelli's gift of a cameo, nor Saulini's cameos, nor ivory carvings from Dieppe, nor the Cathedral of Milan in mother-of-pearl engaged my attention—I may say my heart—as did a ring cut for the bazaar by a Southern prisoner from a horn button and inlaid with a scrap of precious metal. I had hitherto had a great distaste for barter and gain from suffering. Perhaps the shape of the advertisement—I had been undergoing emotional experiences with rings—changed my opinion. It was situated, appropriately for my recollections, in the neighborhood of little models of gravestones.

I turned with a sigh to more cheerful modeling, the casts of Jefferson Davis, considered very excellent, and a bronze Mephistopheles

placed in juxtaposition to a portrait of Stonewall Jackson at prayer. Nearby was a sword for General Lee and dividing attention with a Bible at another stall, also to be presented to the major-general, with an inscription from "undersigned" Englishmen and Englishwomen "Recognizing the genius of the General, Admiring the humanity of the Man, Respecting the virtues of the Christian."

I had picked up my tiny adjutants, one on either arm, that I might read the inscription undisturbed. I was mentally echoing its sentiments with unbiased heartiness when a trill of girlish laughter broke on my ear.

"So perfectly natural to come across you this way, extinguished by Mrs. Patty's children," said one of those schoolgirls Patty had deserted on their vacation and who let a companion bear down upon me with a raffle slip for a hogshead of tobacco.

She was considerably pretty, but I was all against tobacco when I was not all against raffles. I would not raffle for a Manx kitten which procured a hundred dollars without my



aid, nor for a Yankee rabbit, nor for the last bale of old Sea Island cotton in Liverpool, nor for Varina Davis of Limerick, the little Shetland which trotted daintily round the hall in gay caparison and brought the bazaar fifteen hundred dollars. But every lassie with a raffle book was escorted by a defending laddie and I had to make good my refusals by patronizing donations from the ladies of Niagara, the ladies of Halifax, and all the countless traps the tradesmen of Liverpool and the manufacturers of England had put in the hands of the Confederates.

A bachelor I was. A bachelor I looked to be. The children were no defense to me. I escaped with them—munching cream candy from New York—into the tent of mechanism, where birds were flying, waters falling, and rope-dancers pirouetting all day long. I emerged to escape again, this time to the concert room, where a pianist, a boy phenomenon, made peaceful music daily and rivalled the Henri Draytons, the band of the Twelfth Lancashire Artillery, and the hall organ. I am told he dropped the

vainglory of fame for domestic joys and became a physician of repute.

As I left the concert room, some one was humming at its door, "Maryland, my Maryland," and turned to me the bright face and auburn hair of the Miss Ogbourne who had assisted in Patty's Canada Sunday School. A pleasant greeting, a few sentences of laughing reminiscences she did not dream were sharp to me, and I spied her slender fingers furtively preparing her book of blanks. There was a sudden blocking of the passage where we stood and the usual disappearance of my little charges from view, which always gave me the feeling that they had sunk through the floor. I was glad to make excuse of their rescue from the depths below my sight, and land them in the space of the dining saloon.

"There is some one else here you know," Miss Ogbourne called across the crowd, but she waved her weapon of war at me as I turned away and I gave her back the smile of the deaf who won't hear.

I was in the Nisi Prius court of the building,

delightful to look upon after the flare of fancy goods, with its decorations of plants supplied by the generosity of the Botanic Gardens. The staff of the Southern Club were providing turtle, venison, and other refreshment of genial fragrance, but there was no hospitable comfort for me in sight or smell. I felt again that approach of a disturbing element to which I have alluded.

I could have sworn that for a fleeting instant I saw the outline of Clay Monroe's face on the sunny wall, like a shadow traced by the light of a candle.

I was aroused once more to all the recent events of my life. I was keenly alive to the humiliations I had endured and the liability of my character and situation to bring me others. It was a cup of cold water to my thirsty pride to meet Colonel Monroe's Branch, sniffing balmy odors at the saloon door, and receive his bows and ejaculations of delight. As his gentle, soft black hands relieved me of the indecorous burden of the two tired children hanging on my shoulders, I had the prescience I would forgive

him a host of sins which indeed he committed in my service after the colonel's death.

The colonel, Branch told me, escorting me home, was in Rock Ferry with his baroness daughter, catching cold every day going up to try his eyesight with a sea glass in the windy tower of his hotel. It seemed as though the deserted father might be looking for his son, for the latter had been strangely silent.

"But we hear," said Branch.

"From whom?" I asked, catching my breath.

"From Mrs. Clay," said he, and the world was all dizzy to me.

The colonel had expressed a wish more than once to see me. I had never found the old man specially congenial, but I went to Rock Ferry that evening. He lay sick in bed. Upon a table at his side was a picture of Tostie in her wedding dress—a *Le Jeune* photograph from the Levitsky Gallery in Paris. The saucy page fashion of her hair had disappeared. Two soft crimped puffs lay on her forehead, a little tuft of curls appearing at the left from the rich coil which covered the back of her head. She was



evidently, as usual, affected by her dress, the bride's putting on of a gentle aloofness with her wedding garments.

I looked with burning eyes at the misery and mystery of the sight—her sweet but wistful expression, the wife's ringed hand conspicuously in view. She was to me—in her satin and pearls, dedicated to the companionship of Clay Monroe—nothing else but a sacrifice. The colonel's daughter, a feminine copy of Clay dignified with a likeness of her father's quiet courtesy and her daughter's even amiability, followed my eyes to the picture.

"It is very lovely to us that Clay surrendered to so affectionate a woman," said she, quickening my wound. "Whatever my father's prejudices have been, she has won his heart by her letters since her marriage. She is so full of high purpose, so determined on her duty, we feel as if she had almost married our dear impulsive boy to watch over him. Her one fault is that she gives us only scant news of him, but indeed the naughty fellow has been selfish in his happiness. He has been most remiss in not writing himself."

It was easy to trace the effect of his remissness on the colonel. The surprise of Clay's sudden marriage, the breaking away from his close filial fellowship, had come upon the old man when he was more physically unprepared than usual. He lay upon his sick-bed, a lovely and serene picture, but one had only to talk with him a few moments to realize that the purpose of his life—to keep Clay bound to his own goodness—had been taken from him. He was passing away more from inertia of motive than of body.

It was his pleasure to plead with me to stay each time I prepared to leave. He groped pathetically on the counterpane when he missed my hand. Yet he alluded to Clay but once during the night watch I shared with Branch. The dim room had been silent a long while when he spoke out, raising his hand imperiously. His words were Jacob's sentence on his son.

“Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.”

Shortly after, he put a burden on me by pressing my hand and saying: “I should like to lie among Anita's trees.”

If I could have ignored this request when the opportunity arrived that I could lay him by his wife in Virginia, Branch would not have let me forget it. It seemed as though the thought of trusting his last wishes to me was a sudden, sweet balm to the old man. He immediately gave himself up to my embarrassed ministrations with a confidence that was painful to me. He even preferred to receive his stated doses from my hand and made me feel I was a hypocrite when he said, "How you loved my son!" I shrank from the claim it seemed to me he was establishing on my future.

It is very difficult to tell without sensationalism the sequence of incidents following that night which words make so much of but which, to the participants, were a wholly simple course of events.

When the colonel's daughter took my place and I returned to my hotel in the early morning, it seemed the most natural thing in the world to find Clay's bloodhound lying at my door as I had found him innumerable times in Canada.

The great brute slunk in after me, evidently expecting to meet his master in my room. It was empty, and the hound dropped with a human sigh at my feet. Something in the animal's eyes fixed heavily upon me, and its labored breathing called my attention to the bruises on its body. Remembering the picture of Clay holding down the dog with his foot, his hand upon his whip, and thinking of the precious life now in daily contact with his temper, I looked at the poor beast in horror. I took its big head upon my knee and rang for remedies.

"The fellow has not been harried. He has been tied up, that is all," said the hotel clerk who happened to pass my door and come to my assistance. "See the mark of his broken rope round his neck. He has banged and exhausted himself getting free.

While we both worked over him with lotions and stimulants, I ordering the best the house pharmacopœia could supply, the dying creature suddenly threw us off, staggered to its feet, gave a deep, solemn bay—a signal to the



colonel that its watch on Clay was ended—and keeled over, dead.

Thus advised of Clay's presence in the town, I had every reason to expect him at the colonel's bedside, but when death came to give everlasting sight to those darkened eyes, it was Tostie who filled the place of the beloved son, the culprit who had betrayed his father to the Silent Conqueror. After all was over, sitting alone with me, close at my knees, her head bowed at the arm of my chair, she wept—not for the dead—such tears as it shames man to record as being possible to woman.

She had not seen Clay since their wedding-day. They had not been long from their vows in church, scarcely started on their wedding journey, when the scoundrel had shocked and chilled her by borrowing money from her. He had had the superb impudence to complain, like a fretful child, of her ungraciousness and compare her to me.

"Duane would give me the world if I asked it," he had said. "He would be cut to the heart by any lack of affection from you to me."

She had controlled herself to win his confidence and discovered that he had pinched himself to reimburse Mrs. Victor for exporting his cotton to England on a vessel in which she had part concern. His scheme of exchange of arms for the cotton had failed and he had lost all interest in disposing of it for money.

Mrs. Victor, in her knavish foolery, had advised a smart adventurer of Clay's scheme. It is needless to give his name. He was one who went in and out among our exiles as a friend. He made a pretty penny with local authorities in the seizure of the cotton and I myself had a gay fight to blot out John Dolliver's name from the transaction, since Clay left it undefended on the bales which had successfully run the blockade.

Tostie knew enough to accuse Clay of cowardice. It is perhaps just to imagine that in an awful rush of temper, he feared himself. He left her alone, unprotected—her money in his pocket. For a time he advised her by telegrams of his stopping-places, gave her the chance to humble herself and follow, but offered

no apology nor promise of return. She bravely pursued the route of their proposed wedding journey, hiding away at intimations of an acquaintance's neighborhood and going alone—poor deserted bride—for her wedding picture. Finding herself near Interlaken, where Mrs. Victor was staying, she went there, but was cast off once and forever, with her many claims, money rights included.

“I won't be worried about you, though our separation is imperative enough to call in the people of this *pension* if not carried out,” her aunt had said, “for I know you can supply the needs of your life with religion. Having started out to be a philanthropist with the Geffrard connection, you will doubtless prefer that high profession to a life with Clay. Don't forget you never gave him any of the privileges of a lover, not even a walk alone with you.”

Indeed Clay had found a sad lack of excitement in Wales.

Tostie had undergone the hard experience of seeing him lose interest in herself at the approach of the wedding.

"If you only had been there," said she to me between her sobs. I dared not ask why.

Hers is not the sole hasty marriage I have known brought about by loneliness and propinquity.

She had been right in serving me for breach of promise, but she should rather have called it breach of warranty. I had given her substantial surety of my humble devotion, and then, at her first pretty, shamefaced tiff with me, I had gone away on stilts. How much of her subsequent mortification came through me is even yet too bitter a problem for me to calculate.

With every manly instinct of love and succor God had given me, with every longing of my life throbbing wildly to her desolation, I felt cruel circumstance come down between us. Her helplessness, her appeal to me, the very nearness of her presence, pushed me away from the opportunity of her dependence which I had so craved. All too coldly I had to take my leave.

"You won't forget me?" said she.

"Forget you!" I exclaimed, wringing her

hands and turning quickly from the room, unable to say another word.

"You cannot refuse to be her friend, to take her right to your heart," said I to Patty in a voice of anguish. "She has not a relative in the whole world."

"But Clay?" said Patty firmly, looking up at me with tears of sympathy in her brown eyes. I understood all the warning her words implied.

CHAPTER XII.

MONSIEUR AND MADAME.

So it came about that I did not feel it expedient to see Tostie again before I sailed for the United States, but during my last evening in Liverpool I wrote for her a long confession, and putting it in the crown of my old soft felt hat, went out to post it. I spent the night wandering restlessly through the streets. When I returned the steamer express was at the hotel door waiting for my trunk. I hastily packed my old hat and put on a new one.

I was going South with power from John Dolliver to straighten out his affairs. Branch was with me, an escort for the remains of Colonel Monroe which I had undertaken to commit to a resting-place in Virginia. Clay had crossed before me, before news of his father's death could find the place where he

hid his mortification at the failure of his plans. He had secured a passage on the West Indian vessel which had brought John Dolliver over, by showing the letter Juan Papa had given me for my old friend's safe conduct and which I had intrusted to him. He left a message to be delivered to Tostie after his departure—the most scathing rebuke of ingratitude he could concoct.

“Finding my power of attorney for Mrs. Victor's Scotch nephews somewhat defective, I go home to have a deed made which will be forwarded to you with instructions which I hope will not put you to very much trouble.”

The unknowing world said very pretty things about his flight, his unselfish terror—others' interests being on his heart—of Sweet Bay's sharing the fate of its port, his putting love of country before the love of a young husband. No one contradicted. Mrs. Victor was for once silent.

It was the night following one of the bloodiest battles toward the close of our war that, being astray for a few hours because of the in-

interrupted travel, I came across him in the far South. It was after a long and eager thirst to meet him. His father was lying at rest under the homestead trees, and I had been to Virginia more than once, to dream a little perhaps. The State had been Tostie's home till, a lonely orphan, she had come wholly into the care of her stepfather's family. I had acknowledged to myself many misunderstandings of jealousy.

As I stood amid the ruck of the battle I was thinking of the rainy evening when, sitting in our Leamington lodgings, I had interpreted Clay's expression of countenance, mistaking his confident prognostications concerning himself for triumphant thoughts of Tostie. I stood above the recent scene of slaughter, near a ring of fires lighted so long ago as the previous night to deceive the enemy as to the position of the army attack. Their pine juice still smouldered on unconquered, diffusing a grateful warmth under the dew.

As I wandered among them the night mist drifted before the morning, and in the revelation of the day Clay Monroe rose from beside

a bed of embers and put his hands in the old familiar way upon my shoulders. For months, over and over in my mind, I had pictured our meeting, how I should control all passions; how with me it would be simply:

“Let us reason together.”

But Clay did not leave the choosing of the text to me. Without a word of greeting or of retrospect, before I could open my mouth, he said:

“Duane, I am not as good as I want to be, but I am as good as I have faith to be.”

He looked into my eyes with his well remembered, deprecating smile. The hectic color upon his cheeks had centered ominously. He was shaken by a pathetic cough. I felt in the weight of his hands upon my shoulders the weakness of his lank, wasted form. I started as my eyes scanned him, for he wore the old uniform which I had discarded in Canada the night I found him in it. He had been making use of it in deeds of daring among the enemy. I cannot apply to him so harsh a word as spy.

It had enabled him to rest unmolested on the battlefield after the routing of his party.

"Speak to me, kindest, truest friend," said he, the ready tears welling in his eyes. "I have been hungry a thousand times for that dear old voice of yours. I would know its music a mile away. I was sure I should see you once more before I got my ticket. I've watched for you day in and day out these last two months, ever since a forager came down from Richmond with thit ancient helmet you had thrown out. I knew it before I saw—" He paused, looking at me half-amused, half-sharply, as he twirled upon his finger the old soft felt hat in which I had put my confession to Tostie to be posted in Liverpool. "I have worn it ever since I found it. My affection was hurt more than you deserve, you lovely tyrant, to find it with that old army buzzard."

If Clay Monroe had been wholly bad he would have been easier to deal with. After all his faults were those of education and constitutional instability rather than morality. He had the same instincts of conscience, the same

passions as myself. It is impossible to think he ever quite lost sight of the beatific vision. It is impossible to entertain the awful thought that he so preferred the companionship of evil as to willingly be shut in with it for all eternity. I cannot believe that his attractions have ceased to be, that they are swallowed up in punishment. Yet in the days that followed I could not induce him to one serious expression about his hereafter, aware as he was of his fatal condition, any more than I could bring him to the subject of his neglected bride.

"You don't know what it is to try to paint yourself white on a background of sins," he said. "I suppose it would be hard for you to believe that I always was a coward and I never was reckless. But that's the plumb truth. Father was forever so sorrowfully sure I was going to be bad, I think I was fascinated to oblige him many a time when I might have done otherwise. I got to be so unsure of myself that I really lived in terror of my own deeds. And I went on till—I don't know exactly how to express it, but you were always

patient at understanding me—I was afraid of being afraid. There's no use talking and laboring with me now, though. I'm perfectly happy and satisfied to think I've come through without making a fool or a poltroon of myself." Poor fellow! what had he made of himself?

"Like yourself, Duane," he said, innocently hurting me by the classification, "I was not meant for the profession of arms."

And then, as if he had not pricked me deeply enough, he went on, "I suppose in Canada when I asked to room with you, after I had proved myself such an ugly devil, you thought I just wanted to nurse you. By my spurs and honor, I was feeling round for you to be will-power for me. Don't you remember how you were always scribbling texts for Mrs. Dolliver's Sunday School on your editorial sheets? Well, you were such a solemn-looking creature, I really thought you believed them all, but I might as well have roomed with an iceberg for all the trouble you took to find a morsel of religion in me. You couldn't say a prayer if you saw me round and you had to button up your Bible in

your breast pocket before my foot was over the threshold. 'Pearls before swine,' I suppose it was with you."

His eyes were joking in my face, but their tears came in a ready rain as I, speechless with remorse, flung my arm about him—needy, loving, pain-wracked trifter—and sat down with his head against my shoulder, I answering with a throb of grief to each cruel shudder of his breathing.

"Don't regret, old fellow," said he. "Father will leave the latch-string out for me. Dear old father! It's a weary while since I've seen him." And it was with Branch, his father's body-guard, not with me, that he died—went out like a little lad falling asleep while the negro crooned a lullaby.

I had no dying message from him to send to the other side. I had not myself received any message from Tostie about my care of him, nor any hint of her reception of my full and free confession. It humiliated me to think how I had discovered my heart to her. I could not but feel she must realize it was through me she

had found a warm nest in Patty's family, and that she owed me some small expression of gratitude.

However admirable it was of her to pay Clay's debts, it exasperated me to think of her deliberately impoverishing herself in memory of one who would have been utterly thankless to her. I was unkind enough to think she was prompted by pride, trying to convince the world of a link between them which had never existed. I did not know what tenderness in her I had evoked by the accurate account I had felt compelled to send the Dollivers of Clay's last days; but, since she gave me no sign, I felt absolved from stringing lifeless words together for form's sake. Silence came down once more between us.

I thanked God daily that I had a definite object before me. The war closed, the months added up a year, while I toiled on, proud and solitary, with my old friend's affairs. Through my humble but unbaffled efforts his was one of the few Southern houses able to pay all obligations. He rewarded me beyond the

value of my services by rechristening his firm "Dolliver & Duane."

I was further recompensed by the discovery of Gaines O'Barr's suspected misdoings. In his anxiety to rid himself of my unwelcome presence—to whom had it ever been wholly welcome?—he rather pushed than hindered my investigations. He boldly revealed that he had prevented his senior's retirement from business to well-earned ease of mind and body, and that he had broken every promise which had induced John Dolliver to continue in partnership with him. He had not only failed to equalize his share of capital by paying interest, but he had used the firm's credit without consultation or guaranty. Many a bitter dose I swallowed before I cut him off completely, as I was forced to press home his agreements on creditors scared by the war.

I was looked upon as an interloper, a foreign spy, in the midst of hard times, long faces, and charming society. I would have given worlds if my mission had been among the Christian Commission and Hospital associations in their

heart-rending but recognized devotion, as they labored to repair the brutal ravages of war. Who can say how many were dying for the want of the three hundred thousand slain? But there were among John's customers those whom war had not affected, and, as it ever is in this perplexing world, I found real poverty jolted by disgusting extravagance.

The summer had settled down in heartless beauty among the still smoking disasters of war. I was slowly paying out our firm's liabilities. Wherever I went—finding the princesses of the South cheerfully become their own hand-maidens, young mothers grinding unflinchingly at the mill for their fatherless children, old fathers waiting in proud poverty for death beside the graves of brave sons—I was listening to the same words whose pathetic hopefulness I heard repeated for years and years, unchecked neither by weather blight nor market fluctuations.

“We must wait for another cotton crop before we can fairly say we have started on an improving condition.”

"We must rally more or less according to success of agriculture."

I was biting the dust in my fallen vanity to think that I could fight no better for my brother countrymen in peace than in war. I was groaning that the heavy taxes on real estate made so small the income I could send Patty's growing children. I was specially lamenting that my guardianship of the Victors in Scotland, which Clay had transferred to me at my earnest request, had been also hampered by the times. I was fretting that their one friend should not, through them, hear well of my skill and kindness, though it was my own wounded pride which had shut me off from her. Suddenly my dead horizon lived again though it broke into light with a thunderbolt for me.

Mrs. Victor died one Sunday morning during a visit to the Rhine—the last death for a long time among us veterans of the exile—and left me her heir. She had been unmoved by the cholera scare, had succumbed with a peaceful mind to infection, her thoughts being on a more momentous matter. In a quiet hamlet, such as

she usually selected for periodic seclusion and renovation, she discovered that the false burden she had worn upon her head was becoming unnecessary.

In her excitement and joy, epidemics and death became to her invisible trifles. As there are grown up children who see heaven in a vision of wings and harps I suppose she—poor near-sighted imbecile—found a key to paradise in the return of the gift which is a woman's glory. She passed away, patient in her sickness, overflowing with gratitude to her attendants, and laid out in colors selected by herself as becoming to the new feature in her appearance.

"*Châtain-clair*; did you say it would be? Why, of course. I see the beautiful down of the chestnut already," said she to her maid, and these were her last words.

She sent me a message with her money. I quote the less atrocious part.

"Though devotion to my late husband's memory has prevented my hitherto giving any tangible return to Major Paul Duane's gentlemanly admiration, I feel that I am under bonds

of gratitude to him for the change in my constitution produced by the surprise of his marked attentions."

In the first moment of disgust I would have pushed the whole thing from me, but here was a substantial fund for the Victors in Scotland, and I stooped to go through certain public formalities which transferred it to them from myself. And part of Medora Victor's money has erected a monument to Camela, to be seen amid well-kept verdure in the city of Sweet Bay.

How I had the temerity to shut my eyes to Tostie's just and superior claim, I cannot conceive. Shall I confess, what I did not wholly acknowledge to myself, that I was willing to leave her in anxious circumstances rather than make her independent of Patty, independent of Dolliver & Duane? For even in my devotion to John Dolliver's affairs, I find I cannot free myself of some selfishness of motive. Did not my efforts—nobody can be so cruel as to deny it—contribute to the support of Patty's governess? Owing to some quibble of law about a

matter in which she had been concerned with Mrs. Victor she was obliged to send me a legal affidavit. She addressed me only on the cover.

Branch brought me the missive and I saw his eyes rolling over the envelope with even more sly curiosity than usual. He asked to be released from some duty I put upon him, and left the room evidently bursting with importance. He returned to tell me that he had just mailed to "Mrs. Clay" a sealed document which his young master had intrusted to him with a very flattering reliance upon his secrecy, and a command that he should forward it with pious care to "Mrs. Clay" when he had seen me receive a communication in her handwriting of which he had been given a specimen to study. Poor boy—like Clay! He thought he had a tidbit for her and would make her wait for it, make her humble herself to me if he could not to himself. Of course he had found my Liverpool confession unposted, stuck in the lining of my old hat.

It filled me with alarm to imagine the hands through which it had passed. I was overcome

by remorse to think of Clay's silent acceptance of it and affectionate interest in myself. I would have stopped it on its journey if I could. That being impossible, I would have sent a letter after it, but I did not know what Clay might have erased or added. I determined, with a fierce and haughty courage, to place myself, guns all, *en barbette*, where the enemy would be tempted to attack me. Southern business having closed early, I started North.

Patty had made it a point of giving a sentence to Tostie in each of her letters, though I had not encouraged her by responses. Whatever the clearness in her own mind, she had conveyed only confusion to mine.

"Tostie's prettiness and youth are rather faded," she had written once, and I had grown hot at her coolness.

"Tostie's income is growing beautifully less."

"Tostie will have to rouse herself to make her place in the world for there is no one turning up to make it for her."

Lately she had abruptly changed her tactics.

"I wish you would come home and be pleas-

ant with us all. There are indications that Tostie is going to succumb to a second marriage."

Patty's letters had ceased for a time and John's were on old familiar topics. His last had said: "Wife is still about and doing well. In a week or ten days we will both be happier. Children are all well—or as near as can be in so large a squad."

When I reached New York and visited the Trents in Twenty-ninth Street where they had hired a house from a poet, I found them all absorbed in domestic affairs and felt myself an inexperienced and inappropriate addition. They were lamenting that their landlord had removed an Erard piano and left a circle of family efforts in art. At the humble instrument they had substituted, other men than I sang the same galliard songs I used to warble, but my talent was forgotten. The merry daughters and sons, who came fluttering and dashing to give me welcome, paused in surprised scrutiny.

"What are you doing with gray hairs and furrowed face, a man without a single tie or

family care?" said Father Trent. "Come out and see where we make and break the links."

He took me out on the pleasant vine-laden veranda of the house, now altered into a clubhouse, and pointed out in the twilight the graceful outlines and green court of the church across the street. The hum of the city in its summer evening quiet was almost as distant as the hum of our late battlefields. He told me, speaking sadly and softly in the stillness, of the burial that day of a young bride whom he had seen the week before going up the church path to make her vows in the fervent atmosphere of beauty and admiration.

"We are looking to Mrs. Patty when the christening is over," said he, "to invite us to a wedding with the sorrow all behind and the joy all before." He turned into the house without another word, and we sat down to a smart supper of roasted yams and preserved tamarinds which were bitter to me with West Indian associations.

Southerners on their annual visit to New York, for whom my host kept his house open

in summer, were there. I greeted European and Canadian acquaintances among them, and blessed the day that had landed me just there, when I grasped the hand of Mrs. Lethenty. With her own frail health forgotten, she too was learning the distress of exile as she took a roundabout trip to China for her Lambert's health.

"I am going to venture Lambie's wrath and give you his latest discovery," she whispered to me as she bade me good-by with her kind hand on my stooping shoulder and her sweet old eyes moistening at her own words. "He thinks Tostie Carroll—I blessed her for the old name—"is fain ready to give herself away to a good caretaker he knows. You're not a man to appear to advantage when you are unprepared for news, and I pray you won't encourage her fears that she is being taken for pity."

A second crop of grass was springing up, long and blue, when I went into New Jersey to see John and Patty Dolliver. They were boarding in that old mansion on the road between Elizabeth and Rahway which boasted an

underground passage to Albany from whose inhospitable entrance hole several little Dollivers had already, bulging with frightful tales of sheltered refugees and venturous soldiers, been rescued in a state of partial collapse. As I approached it, these little old acquaintances were busy in the shady grounds, one digging for dear life and expecting to unearth history from buried stones which proved to be a deserted fountain. Another was intent at Mrs. Victor's game of croquet with a gracious elder who was revolving in his mind a voluntary exile to a consulate in Spain which he eventually obtained. Daisy, appearing to me of heroic size, strode past me to a music lesson within doors. They knew me not.

The upper half of the old-fashioned entrance door was open. I looked over it at a pair of mammoth rubber boots spattered with New Jersey mud and belonging to the music teacher, a German exile, a Lutheran minister of noble blood and dangerous patriotism and as lovely a talent at his long finger ends as ever wooed away the fears and sorrows of this troubled

world. He was playing Jensen's "Cheerful Wanderer."

Emboldened by the inspiration of his touch upon the piano, I vaulted lightly over the half-door to find my way through the wide white halls and surprise Patty. Her voice came from an upper piazza where she was enthusiastically reading "Madonna Mary" to her husband, who snoozed in a patient, noncommittal manner.

When I had recovered from the delightful ardor of my reception and risked my hereafter by admiration of a small object which should have been Paul but turned out Pauline, I heard a light step going down the hall, its owner bearing refreshments to the professor from Patty's private cupboard. No doubt he needed them—Daisy at the piano was a martyr that martyred—but I should have liked to investigate the step.

Patty, however, surmounted her little Dolly Varden polonaise with a small pie-plate hat with streamers and took me out to see a row of wonderful quince trees on the left-hand side of the old mansion near the children's playhouse.

She went ahead in feverish haste without speaking. As she reached our destination under the row of spreading trees with their celebrated yield yellowing already against a lovely distance of sky and home-like fields, she wrung her hands in the most bewildering manner while tears poured down over her cheeks.

"Tostie will be in Paris next spring for the Exposition, I am sure," said she in a suffocated voice. "If ever any one deserved a pressing invitation and the prettiest apartment to be hired and all the Easter flowers to be found in Paris, she does, and you know you could never be induced to go there alone."

She flung open the door of the playhouse, turned square upon her little heels, and fled through the quince trees, her hat streamers flying like a signal of danger.

Tostie was on her knees picking up the children's scattered toys. She was arrayed in a chambray dress the color of watermelon pulp with suggestions of green rind striping its red pink—the dress Patty had laid by marked

"For Paul Duane's Bride." She sprang to her feet with startled eyes.

She had visited Clay's indifference on me with pride and unfaith, but wounded love clings close. Had she aged? Was she less beautiful? I did not know. I never shall. The dearest and truest came out to meet the bridegroom, wearing his forlorn, travel-stained, war-endangered confession upon her heart. As I took her hands in mine, I felt her tremble from head to foot.

.

She is mine. I am hers. We laugh and weep together. We dispute, but we embrace each other's faults. For us, side by side, the world holds no place of exile. Down upon these pages comes the seal of unutterable bliss.

THE END.

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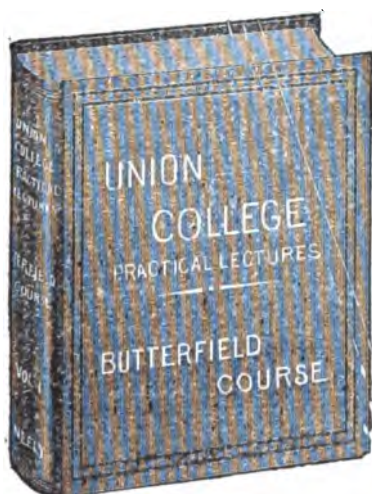
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